Commentary

VOLUME NINETY-TWO • NUMBER TWO • AUGUST 1991

The Future of American Jewry

Irving Kristol

Victory Through Air Power
Edward N. Luttwak

The Two Cultures (Continued)
Michael Lind

Spike Lee Fever
Richard Grenier

Suicide of an Elite?
Edward N. Saveth

The Pollster & the Nazis
Leo Bogart

A Story
Joseph Epstein

Books in Review: Robert Kagan/Daniel Pipes/ Midge Decter/Angelo M. Codevilla/Arch Puddington

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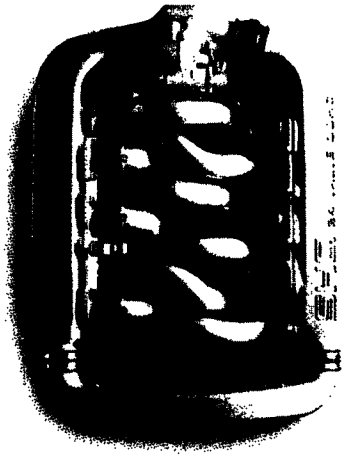

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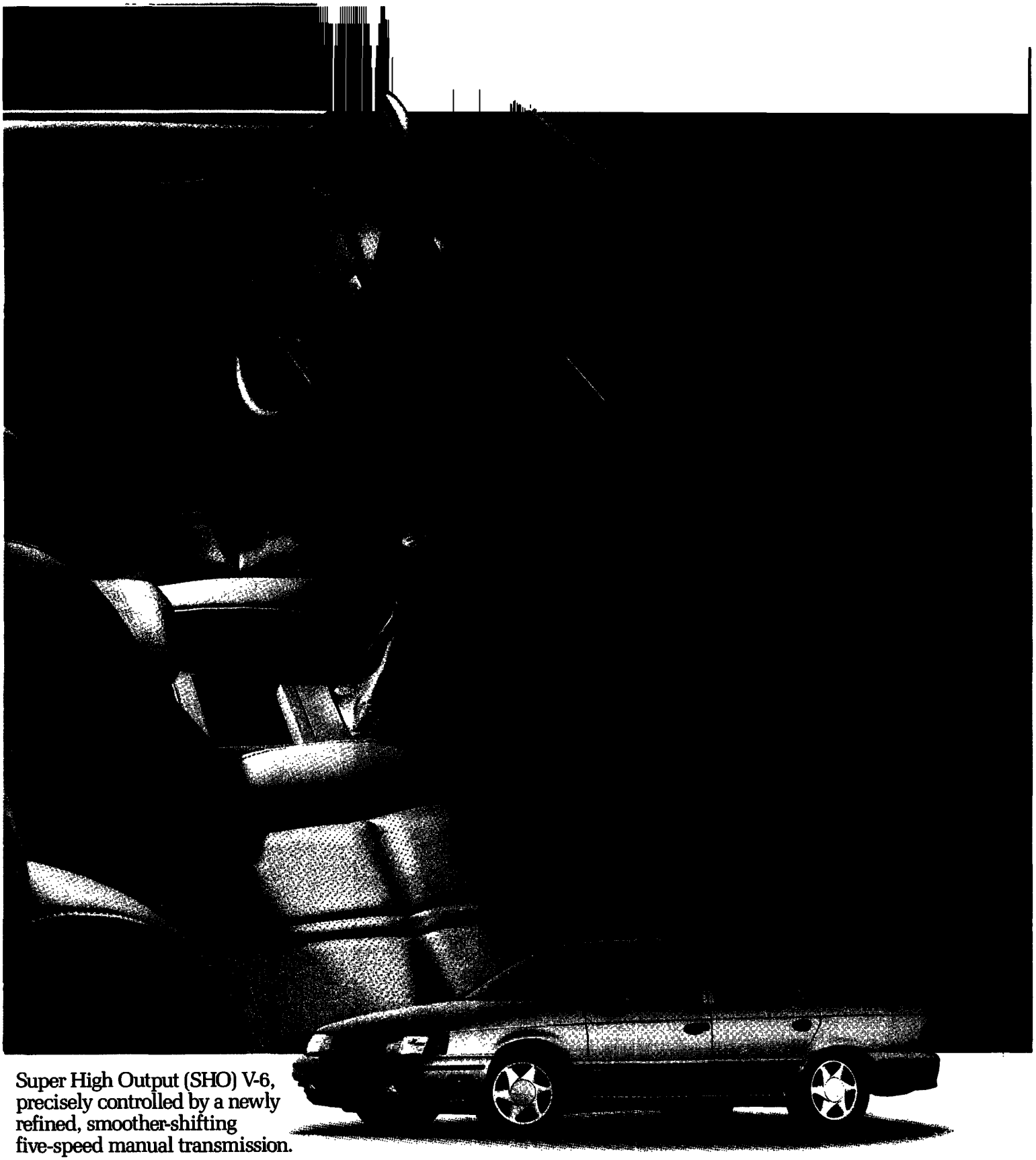

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Commentary

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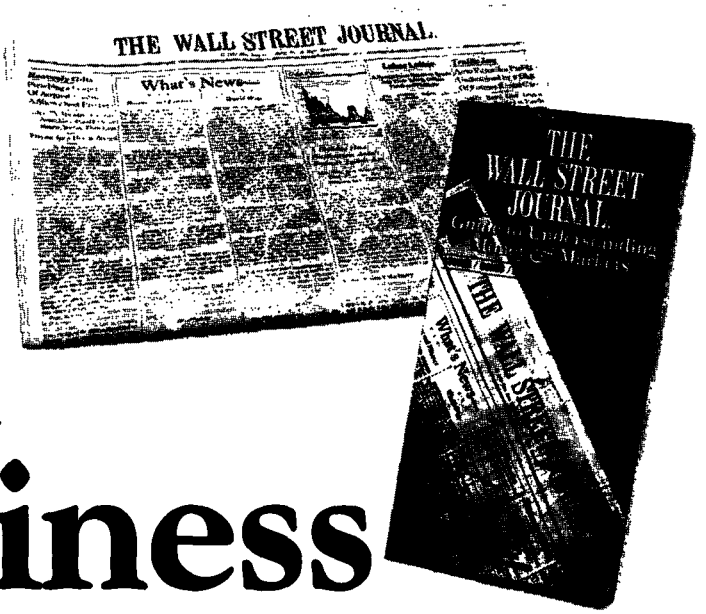

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Letters from Readers

To Test or Not to Test

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Each week seems to bring a new proposal for a national test to improve education. Often these proposals, I have noticed, come from those willing and eager to provide the tests. Barbara Lerner ["Good News About American Education," March] does not fit this pattern, since she recommends tests that are already on the market.

Her theory seems to be that requiring every student to pass a rigorous test in order to graduate from grade or high school will negate societal ills, lack of resources, and poor student motivation—and also make the public schools accountable. I seriously doubt that such testing would help the poor and disenfranchised families and children in America—or improve the schools.

The National Education Association (NEA) has agreed with the need to establish clear goals for education. We believe a set of goals, such as the six national goals set by the President and the governors, can be an important step in school improvement. We agreed with the legislation authorizing the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to measure national progress toward a set of achievement goals. We do not agree with the current attempts to stretch the interpretation of that legislation to allow local district score comparisons, or to establish what all students at a particular grade level ought to know about a particular subject.

National graduation tests will not lead to meaningful reform of the education system. At best they may add incentives for typical middle-class families and children—another hurdle to be jumped over. Such tests cannot make the teaching and learning process a rich and meaningful experience for all the students who deserve and require a good education. Only true school restructuring can do that.

A testing program of the kind Dr. Lerner envisions definitely focuses time and attention onto the items to be tested, and students are indeed more likely to learn those skills they know will be tested. That is the good news about measurement-driven instruction. The bad news—based on the experience of classroom teachers in states with minimum-competence-testing (MCT) programs—is that such programs are too narrow in their focus. Too much precious instructional time gets devoted to test preparation, at the expense of teaching and learning in other areas—to say nothing of school climate and culture. A national test designed for every student in America cannot be robust enough to drive a rich curriculum for all students.

Our schools lack sufficient resources and staff. The money and time that Dr. Lerner wants to invest in testing every child might better be devoted to helping those same children through improved educational opportunities and services. Dr. Lerner admits that a testing system of the kind she recommends would put the burden of educational improvement on the backs of students, not school systems or any level of government. Where is the morality in testing students if schools do not have the resources to assist those who will have difficulty?

This same testing mentality is prevalent in discussions of progress toward the national goals for education. For example, goal 1 says that by the year 2000 all children in America will start school ready to learn. There is now widespread acceptance of the critical role that the first years of life play in later academic success. So you might have expected the early discussions about goal 1 to have centered on the need for federal, state, or local resources to be channeled into already proven ways of increasing children's school readiness. But no—thanks to the testing mentality, some of the first discussions focused on how to design a test for all children to assess whether they meet the goal! Where is the logic in this approach?

The logic may be that testing serves two purposes in the conservative agenda. First, testing programs would place on state and local governments the burden of providing additional resources to help students pass—thereby deflecting attention from the diminishing federal role in funding education. Second, a national testing program would further the drive for "choice" by allowing parents to judge individual schools "good" or "bad" according to how many of their students passed the tests.

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NEA believes that to improve teaching and learning, we need less testing but better assessment. To be helpful, assessment must be timely, diagnostic, and teacher-based. A national test—even on a sampling basis—will function at best as a political scorecard.

National tests administered to every child would have consequences no one can predict. A required cutoff score for high-school graduation, college admission, or employment could bring about a rigid class structure. America has always prided itself on giving people second, third, and even fourth chances to succeed. A test-based numbering system could screen people out of future opportunities at an early age, rather than encouraging the upward mobility we all say we want for citizens in our democratic society.

We do not shun the responsibility of being held accountable for student learning. We do insist that accountability methods, especially tests, be fair to teachers and most importantly to our students.

KEITH GEIGER
President, National Education Association
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Barbara Lerner lists four reasons why she believes the minimum-competence movement succeeded in raising the SAT scores of Hispanic, Asian, and black students a quarter to a half a standard deviation between 1980 and 1989 while other reforms have failed. . . .

I would like to add a fifth reason. The minimum-competence movement, from its inception, focused exclusively on a student's current functioning level. In effect, it said to the student: "We believe you can learn reading and math. You may be ignorant now, but that does not mean you are stupid. If we find on our test that you have not yet learned to read and have not yet mastered arithmetic, then we will teach you. What is more, we will continue to test and to teach you until you have, in fact, mastered these important skills because we are confident you can master them."

How different this attitude is from traditional psychological-testing practices in schools! For almost a hundred years the testing community has told us that there are two kinds of tests—"achievement" tests which measure what you have learned and "IQ" tests which measure your "intelligence" or "aptitude." Further, we have been told that IQ tests can predict future academic achievement—i.e., a person's ability to learn reading and math. Never mind that so-called achievement tests and IQ tests are highly correlated and, on occasion, even contain the same questions. Never mind that intelligence tests contain subtests such as vocabulary, arithmetic, information, comprehension, and similarities. Never mind that the answers to the questions in those subtests of intelligence scales must be learned no less than the answers to questions in achievement tests. Schools still insist they can measure intelligence separately from achievement, even though there is no fundamental difference between the two types of test, a fact that is not disputed by any reputable person in the field of testing.

Nevertheless, for decades, minority children, especially Hispanics and blacks, have been tested with IQ tests and have been told that their low scores indicate "low intelligence" and "low ability." Their parents and their teachers have been told the same thing. Is it any wonder that students stop trying and parents and teachers stop expecting competence?

Most critics of standardized testing have missed this fundamental point. It is not standardized testing *per se* that destroys the self-esteem of minority students. It is not getting a low score on a test of reading or arithmetic that undermines their motivation to learn. What is devastating is being told that you are not capable of learning—that you have low ability. Tests become destructive when scores are interpreted as a measure of intelligence rather than simply a measure of current functioning level—a level which can be significantly improved with intensive effort and practice.

The minimum-competence movement, because it follows a test-teach-retest-teach-retest format, is sending a very important message to minority students: "We *believe* in you. You *can* do it. We will help you to do it." This message is very different from that of traditional psychological testing.

JANE R. MERCER
University of California
Riverside, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Barbara Lerner has it exactly right. Educational progress requires clear standards, with sanctions for failure and rewards for meeting them. The means for meeting educational standards must be readily available, which is the job of the schools in this country. It is no surprise that clear standards of achievement simplify teachers' jobs: they know that all of their students *must* acquire at least basic levels of literacy and numeracy. Far from discouraging higher achievements for many students, minimum-competence standards for high-school graduation have served as a benchmark for academically talented 8th and 9th graders in many school systems.

Standards of achievement need not be only basic literacy and numeracy. They can also incorporate "cultural literacy," to use E.D. Hirsch, Jr.'s phrase. To be able to read a newspaper is not merely a matter of decoding words and sentences. Comprehension of what one reads requires common knowledge of historical, literary, religious, and scientific information. If one does not know that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a revered civil-rights leader, it is difficult to understand why the National Football League may not hold the Superbowl in Phoenix. If one does not know Dickens's character Scrooge, the use of the name to mean miser will not be understood. . . .

Promoting cultural literacy means exposing children to what every literate person ought to know. Not all students will learn everything in the core of American culture, but all will learn more than they currently do. If schools (and parents) have clear standards about what constitutes essential knowledge for our citizens, the body of knowledge can be mastered by most students. . . .

The woeful inadequacy of our children's knowledge of American culture is a matter of international embarrassment. We suffer badly in international competitions in all subject matters, particularly science and mathematics. Unless we set standards of cultural information that are required for basic knowledge, and that schools must teach, we will continue to flunk international tests, and be further reduced as a world economic and political leader.

Thank you, Barbara Lerner, for standing up for standards.

SANDRA SCARR
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Barbara Lerner's central thesis is that statewide MCT testing has markedly increased literacy and numeracy. She cites data for seventeen-year-olds who remain in school and particularly notes the improvement for blacks over the past decade and a half. The catch is that if a seventeen-year-old is not in school we will not notice that he is not literate, and there has been an astronomical increase in the school-dropout rate over this time period.

Dr. Lerner further states that black students "did not give up and drop out in droves" in Florida. But how many is a "drove"? Four out of ten Florida blacks were dropping out of school by 1988, and the white rate was between two and three. She also argues . . . that 80 to 90 percent of minority students failed in Florida on their first try but, of those who stayed in school, 90 percent passed by their fifth try. Multiplying the number of tries by five, however, is an entirely different ball game. The scoring success in Florida would be the equivalent in a football game to that obtained by allowing five times as many downs, that is, twenty downs to make ten yards.

The conventional criticism of statewide minimum-competence testing—supported by many studies—is that teachers end up "teaching to the test," so that the competence tests also come to determine curriculum. But American education has always inclined to encourage diversity . . . and policy decisions tending to produce uniformity should be approached cautiously. When the test score becomes the criterion, the original purpose of the test may be lost and the score becomes the sole objective. . . .

Is the idea itself of minimum competence flawed? Absolutely not: there is nothing wrong with the idea that there is a certain minimum body of knowledge and skills which every student should acquire. But the term minimum properly should refer not to the *level* but rather to the *range* of required accomplishment. There are certain skills of literacy and numeracy which every child should master. The concept behind norm-referenced testing is the comparison of performance levels in terms of the given amount of time spent on a particular task. Criterion-referenced testing, on the other hand (and the associated concept of mastery learning), implies that everyone can master the subject matter, though individuals differ in the amount of time required to do so. . . .

Is mastery possible? For the kinds of tasks appropriate for universal mastery, the answer is yes. The United States and other nations have just gone through a technologically sophisticated war in the course of which a large-scale intensive training-education program was carried out on-site. Average time-on-task for the American soldiers in the Middle East equaled the average student's investment in two years of post-high-school education. . . . The results gave no cause to doubt that mastery is attainable by all, given adequate programs, time, and will.

There are a number of weaknesses in the way the minimum-competence approach is currently being implemented. . . . What is it that is universally needed? Literacy and numeracy. These are largely matters for elementary and lower elementary schools. It makes no sense to wait until the end of a trip to check whether the engine is in tune. In the same way, universal-competence testing should focus on the lower grades, where the knowledge and skills necessary to all subsequent learning are imparted.

The upper grades are not the place for uniformity but rather for the progressive development of individual talents in all their diversity. Those who believe they know what is universally necessary at higher grade levels face a heavy burden of proof. At one time, for example, Latin was an absolute prerequisite for medical school and one of the undersigned chose to go into engineering because it was the only college-degree program for which high grades in high-school Latin were not a mandatory entrance requirement.

There is one potential difficulty with demanding education for mastery. If mastery is the goal, then promotion should follow upon it, but school administrators almost universally believe that promotion should be based on age, not on academic performance. Thus we get social promotion of those who have not achieved mastery and social retention of those who have. Yet empirical research shows . . . that academic promotion has positive effects both for academic and social development. The picture is less clear for academic retention, though the effects seem to be positive in the early grades just where mastery needs to be achieved.

The notion of competence testing is sound if it demands competence, if it is appropriate to the grade level, if it is a valid test of the subject matter, and if the end result is a degree, a diploma, or other credit. A competence test which is little more than an out-of-context hurdle is a waste of time and effort. . . .

As it is now practiced, minimum-competence testing does nothing to improve learning. It fails because it attempts to solve a problem remote from the time of testing by very indirect means. To be effective, testing must be designed to address learning at the time it should have occurred. . . .

While minimum-competence testing has failed, mastery-competence testing can succeed, provided that it is designed as a valid assessment of the achievement of mastery, provided that it indeed becomes the criterion of that achievement, and provided that it . . . measures diversity of talents and diversity of curricular alternatives.

With respect to the educational potential of minorities, especially blacks, one has only to bear in mind the success story of the former Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. Prior to the 1954 *Brown* v. *Board of Education* Supreme Court desegregation decision, the Dunbar students were not only successful in high school, but they also graduated and went on to college or university in significant proportions. It was this school which provided the black recruits to our society's elite.

GORDON M. HARRINGTON
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

JERRY HIRSCH
University of Illinois
Champaign, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In her dreadfully inaccurate article, Barbara Lerner distorts much evidence to fit her conclusion. Her gall in publishing so many errors leaves me breathless. . . . Herewith a brief listing of only *some* of the mistakes:

1. Dr. Lerner attributes the rise of test scores to the onset of state minimum-competence-testing programs. Her position is thus fatally wounded by the fact that states with no MCT programs also showed climbing test scores.

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"IT WAS A REAL BLESSING," Frances Vaughn said after volunteers from the Christmas in April program gave her house a face lift.

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FRANCES VAUGHN
Washington, D.C.

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The launch of Christmas in April☆USA was made possible through the commitment of many people and corporations, including a grant from the Toyota USA Foundation. We're proud to say we've been a supporter from the very start.

As a result, the national body has been able to help more communities start local programs. (The number has grown from 13 to 52 in just over two years.)

Frances Vaughn is certainly thrilled the folks around Washington rallied behind Christmas in April.

In fact, she would have jumped through the roof with joy if it hadn't just been repaired.

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2. Dr. Lerner asserts that the effects of MCT programs became evident as test scores began to rise in 1980. Wrong. A Congressional Budget Office study clearly shows that scores for 5th-grade students started to climb in 1975—before the vaunted MCT programs even existed. The curves plotted over time equally clearly show that these elementary-school students continued to score well as they became high-school students. The higher scores rolled through the grades like a rippling wave as the elementary schoolchildren got older. Scores at the secondary level would have risen without any MCT programs.

3. Scores on the SAT *never* declined. It only looks that way because people like Dr. Lerner make apples-to-oranges comparisons. The SAT standards were set in 1941. The average score was set at 500. The 10,654 students who showed up to take the test in 1941 were all white, mostly male, mostly living in the Northeast, and mostly headed for Ivy League schools. By any reckoning, they were an elite.

All SAT scores are compared to this 1941 group, but today's SAT-takers are in no way comparable. Twenty-seven percent are minority. Many are poor. Fifty-two percent are female (for reasons still in dispute, females do not score as well as males on the SAT). If we look at a group of students similar to the 1941 standard setters, *we find absolutely no decline.* (For interested readers, I presented an extended analysis of this point in the November 21, 1990 edition of *Education Week*; officials at both the College Board, which commissions the SAT, and at the Educational Testing Service, which prepares it, called the analysis reasonable.)

4. Dr. Lerner asserts that blacks have gained "almost half a standard deviation" on the SAT. Wrong again. The gain for blacks in the period noted is 21 points on the SAT-Verbal and 26 points on the SAT-Mathematics. The standard deviation (SD) of the SAT-V is 111, that of the SAT-M, 121. Dividing the gain by the SD reveals the gains as a meager .19 SD and .21 SD, not .5 SD as Dr. Lerner mistakenly claims. At this rate of gain, blacks will need almost another century to catch up to whites.

Unhappily, there is evidence that even some of the tiny gain that does exist for blacks is spurious. The funding cuts of the Reagan years meant that many of the poorest students would go to cheap community colleges that do not require the SAT. The SAT is correlated with income—if the poorest, lowest-scoring students dropped out of the test-taking pool, the scores would rise, but the gain would not reflect increased achievement.

5. The international studies Dr. Lerner cites are meaningless. The children are not comparable. Only a couple of countries have school years as short as ours. Japanese children go to school 243 days a year, go to school after school, go to school on Saturdays, and have mothers at home (not working) who pressure them. . . .

Finally, as regards international comparisons, Americans account for 30-40 percent of all articles published in the 40,000 professional journals of science and mathematics. The United Kingdom, Japan, and the Soviet Union all finish second with 8 percent. These figures have been stable since 1973. We could hardly maintain such scientific superiority if the system were in such terrible decline. . . .

6. Dr. Lerner plays fast and loose with history, claiming that the MCT movement began in 1976. But Denver started its program in 1962, Oregon in 1972. Nor did the various programs ever have the monolithic quality Dr. Lerner gives them.

7. Although I have spent the last fourteen years in the area of educational assessment, I was formally trained as a cognitive and developmental psychologist, fields with which I continue to keep abreast. As such, I must say that Dr. Lerner's "automatic ceiling effect" is the most naive—nay, absurd—theory of cognition I have seen in many years. I am astonished that a psychologist could conceive of it, much less publish it. It accords with nothing else in the field.

8. Dr. Lerner never tells you where she gets her data, leaving me suspicious. She claims that a 1975 NAEP assessment showed much illiteracy while one "today"—she does not specify the year—finds universal literacy. But the charts in NAEP's 1990 publication, *Accelerating Achievement*, show no change. According to the publication: "Across all three ages assessed, overall reading performance in 1988 was as good as, if not slightly better than, it was nearly two decades earlier."

These are only some of the errors and misinterpretations Barbara Lerner makes. . . .

GERALD W. BRACEY
Director of Research and
Evaluation
Cherry Creek Schools
Englewood, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Barbara Lerner has written two articles: one that suggests our students do not measure up in international competitions and a second suggesting that our children are really doing better than we think. As evidence for the latter, she points with justifiable pride to the rise in the SAT median among minority students. Yet what Dr. Lerner ignores is at least as important as what she cites. Despite the rise in SAT scores among designated minorities, the proportion of those scoring above 1200 (1600 being the maximum score) has steadily decreased since 1963.

What Dr. Lerner has actually pointed out is that there is a compression toward the mean in American education; perhaps yet another manifestation of radical egalitarianism. Rather than take solace from this condition, we should deplore it. What these results indicate is that our schools do not value excellence and seemingly have a penchant for lifting some from the bottom quartile to the mean, but have little ability to lift many of those at the mean to the top quartile. If anything, this evidence would seem to support the view that our students cannot compete with those in many foreign countries.

Her suggestion that educators adopt the lessons of the minimum-competence movement to require an SAT combined score of 700 is instructive. The 700 score is currently employed in Proposition 48, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) minimum for Division I athletic eligibility. Quite obviously, this score was selected because it is low enough not to disqualify good basketball players, even though it is not high enough to ensure a reasonable level of college performance, i.e., taking courses other than weight-lifting and film appreciation.

In adopting this same standard Dr. Lerner seemingly overlooks the problem that "minimums" set very low ultimately undermine educational performance. Is someone with a combined SAT score of 700 (keep in mind that you get 400 for

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signing your name) capable of taking a university course in differential equations or understanding Dante or drawing conclusions from *The Iliad*? As someone who has been involved with university education for three decades, I can assure Dr. Lerner that her sights are set much too low and her analysis is far too hopeful.

As an inveterate optimist she has decided to describe the performance of American students metaphorically as a glass half full; I contend that the glass is half empty, and that isn't good news.

HERBERT LONDON
Gallatin Division
New York University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Barbara Lerner's "Good News About American Education" is just another example of her brilliant analytical skills. While many of our colleagues in the measurement community decry the uselessness of competence testing, she finds the gold in it. While some of these measurement specialists sift through the latest editions of measurement textbooks hoping to provide new "proof" of the worthlessness of standardized tests, she states the obvious: these tests are "critically important . . . if we are to maintain our place in the world in the next century." I can just see the long-time critics scurrying to their word processors to do battle with that message.

I have long argued that the minimum-competence movement was successful, and that it served as just another example of the effectiveness of the American school system. . . . But like many others, I have been concerned that undue emphasis on minimums might lower general expectations. Dr. Lerner is correct; through mandates and targeting of fiscal resources, the minimum standards that were set were met by the schools, and important progress was made. Contrary to widespread criticisms, teachers were not ineffective, and schools did accomplish what they were mandated to do. However, there was a downside to all of this which even Dr. Lerner has not addressed: the proportion of high-achieving students declined during this period. . . .

I number myself among those who worry that the minimum has become the maximum. But the fault lies not with the rationale for establishing a common level of attainment. . . . The problem we face today is that the concept of minimum competence is pervasive, and our focus is still on the floor and not the ceiling (or perhaps, as Dr. Lerner implies, the higher walls needed to support a ceiling).

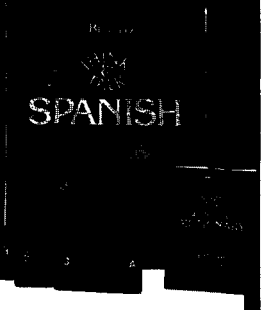
How do we raise our expectations? . . . One tool that has proved to be powerful enough to do this is statewide assessment programs.

These programs have, for the most part, proven themselves as tools for focusing instruction for those needing remediation. They very likely will work as well for those who need higher levels of instruction. In an earlier work, I proposed certain assumptions and recommendations to Michigan's State Board of Education, and . . . some of these recommendations are applicable to other states as well. Recognizing that the minimum-competence program mandated for the states had indeed shown evidence of the kind Dr. Lerner speaks of, I called upon the State Board of Education to: (1) develop a plan which incorporates a two-tier assessment of student academic status; (2) establish a standard-setting advisory committee; (3) assume a major portion of the funding needed to implement a two-tier assessment system; (4) establish a technical advisory council to monitor the development of such a system.

In essence these recommendations called for keeping the MCT program intact at the grade levels established (4, 7, and 9) since the first year the program was mandated (1969), but adding a second tier of tests which would be offered at all of the grade levels not covered in the MCT program. Further, tests should be added to cover more than just the reading and mathematics areas of the first or minimum level. These would include language skills, science, social science, and listening skills. These tests would cover higher-order thinking skills as well as the lower levels tested by the established minimum-competence program.

The second tier of tests could be used to (1) group students for differentiated instruction; (2) determine the pacing of instruction; (3) report reliable information to parents during conferences; and (4) evaluate curriculum.

"They couldn't believe an American actually spoke their language."



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I agree completely with Dr. Lerner's view of the "gold" to be found in the MCT programs of the past twenty years or so. I am concerned about the pervasiveness of lowered expectations for all students. It is to be hoped that we can recognize the need for continued MCT programs while at the same time moving ahead to restore the challenging programs for our very talented, and neglected, higher-achieving students.

HERBERT C. RUDMAN
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is possible to quibble about certain details in Barbara Lerner's article and in so doing miss the main message. I would quibble with Dr. Lerner, for example, about her reliance upon the tests of the 60's and 70's. The problem with using standardized tests to measure change is that they are often slower to change than the curriculum and they may become out of date in the sense of not being good reflections of the state of knowledge in a field. The curriculum in language and mathematics, for example, has changed faster than the tests. One can argue that the changes have not been for the best, but then we cannot blame the students for the failures of the pedagogues and testmakers.

I would also argue that the anti-testing movement is still alive and well, as is a concern with multiple-choice norm-referenced tests as the measure of a system's health (I certainly share that concern). Such tests are blunt instruments in relation to the job the public and people like Barbara Lerner and I want done. As yet, however, I do not see a strong alternative, although the international measures are generally better than most.

I would further quibble that the bad news about the shrinking proportion of excellent students may be illusory. The absolute number may have shrunk, but the proportion of excellent students is probably about what it was twenty or even fifty years ago. The problem is that we refuse to acknowledge a two-tier system. If we acknowledged it we might do something about it, but we keep insisting that we have one educational system for everyone with equal opportunity and equal results for all.

These quibbles aside, what of Barbara Lerner's main message that we should raise the stakes in education? Clearly her point that the minimum-competence movement had an impact that the excellence movement did not is telling. There may have been other factors at work, to be sure, but the movement did indeed propose a specific solution to a specific problem and in many states it did have its effect. Unfortunately we do not know all of its iatrogenic effects—what it did to dropout rates and grade-repeating, for example.

It is clear, however, that when expectations concerning student achievement are set, a large number of students will meet those expectations. It is also clear that our expectations are too low. The studies conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) have long established that students by and large learn what they are taught (the converse holds true also, of course). The minimum-competence movement specified what should be taught and gave little reward to school, teacher, or student for failure (an unfortunate side effect of some other programs). An MCT program should include sanctions to prevent schools from promoting student failure in order to get more funds (as has been the case with some of the programs in compensatory education and learning disability).

Whether one concurs with the specifics of Barbara Lerner's modest proposal, such as the use of the SAT, I think that the idea of announcing specific expectations is an honest one. If it is implemented, many teachers will have to be helped to think about ways to be honest with their students about those expectations and the ways by which they may be met. They have not been encouraged to be honest in the past, and to learn a new approach may be daunting, but it is worth it.

ALAN C. PURVES
Director, Center for Writing
and Literacy
State University of New York
Albany, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Barbara Lerner is on target in her evaluation of the educational "reforms" of the 60's. There was then and there is now no adequate research basis for making the self-esteem of the learner the prime mover in the educational process. Why did the self-esteem concept take hold so broadly among the teacher-training faculties of our universities, and why is it still with us? Probably because it represents wishful thinking by persons who resist dealing with educational realities.

Dr. Lerner is also on target with respect to the resistance in schools of education and elsewhere to MCT standards for graduation from high school. Use of standards and appropriate curricula by teachers and hard work by students (not forgetting support of teachers and encouragement of children by parents) may not solve all of our educational problems, but these changes represent a big step in the right direction. Shifting functional literacy competence from the 12th to the 8th grade, as she suggests, would be another big step.

The gain in SAT scores of black college aspirants discussed by Dr. Lerner is real and important, but the reported gain is too large. (Dr. Lerner apparently chose the wrong standard deviation.) If the gain is a quarter to a third of a standard deviation, furthermore, there is a discrepancy with the larger gain made by blacks at age seventeen over the same period of time in the NAEP results. It is far from obvious that the explanation derives from the selective factors that determine which high-school graduates take the SAT. NAEP researchers should examine their own data carefully.

LLOYD G. HUMPHRIES
University of Illinois
Champaign, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Three cheers and three cheers more for Barbara Lerner! What she described parallels much that has happened in higher education as well over the past two decades. During the 70's, we permitted pampered adolescents and young, young adults to tell us what they wanted to learn. Cravenly, we dropped required courses and drastically watered down standards.

Ironically, the development of a new ethic of leisure, the drug craze, the TV explosion, and loose academic standards all combined to create a semi-literate college population. Tragically, the "minorities" were erroneously convinced by hustlers in and outside of the academy that they could not cut the mustard. Therefore, they needed special consideration—quotas and

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affirmative action—which made things even worse.

We are still wringing our hands and blaming everyone but ourselves. If every college professor devoted one-quarter of his teaching time to fundamentals (*à la* Barbara Lerner's suggestions—i.e., grammar, syntax, spelling, and basic math), things would improve in a short time.

SHELDON SELLER
Queens College
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I agree with the underlying thesis of Barbara Lerner's excellent article that the United States must and can produce students and workers of greater competence. . . . I think it is useful, however, to add to her comments some perspectives from research on competence that I have been involved with over the past 20 years.

Dr. Lerner's linkage of the "feel-good-now" variety of self-esteem to a decline in intellectual development is right on target. We have found that all competence-related behavior results from an individual's perception (1) of his ability to succeed and (2) of the value of the reward associated with success. If the combination of these perceptions is not sufficiently positive, the effort to succeed is not made. . . .

The problem with the "feel-good-now" variety of self-esteem is that it is not linked to any specific effort. Whenever self-esteem is achieved in a manner unrelated to earned competence, there is a tendency to avoid any attempt to achieve such competence, . . . causing a decline in achievement scores like the one observed in the 1970's.

When self-esteem *is* appropriately earned, however, students gain more self-confidence with each learning effort that is made. Each successful experience reinforces the growing confidence from previous experiences, and learning activities that were initially perceived as probable failures, and hence avoided, are now sought out as probable success experiences. If there is also a valued award associated with such experiences—graduation, college entrance, a higher quality of life for oneself and one's children—then the perceptions are reinforced sufficiently to sustain the effort until success is achieved. . . .

Dr. Lerner's insightful comments about iatrogenic effects need to be expanded. The classic example of iatrogenic retardation is the well-meaning parent who shields a child from some set of challenges to compensate for the parent's perception of a deficiency in the child. As a result, the child never exerts the effort to develop in the area of the perceived deficiency, thus bringing about the very failure that the parent was protecting against. Any person providing a protective environment for another incurs such risk. This is especially applicable to those who serve the educationally needy; they must be made aware of, and held accountable for, their iatrogenic effects on other human beings.

I would like to suggest also that Dr. Lerner's focus only on norm-referenced tests could be misleading. Such tests set up a contest environment which is very helpful in providing rewards to winners and they also, as she points out, have the advantages of being fast, accurate, inexpensive, and widely accepted. But they must be understood as the rules for keeping score in the *minor* leagues of competency en route to the major leagues of the real world.

Our nation needs star players as parents, military personnel, engineers, designers, managers, . . . and in countless other roles. The tests recommended by Dr. Lerner for use in schools cover only the basic skills for these roles. We must also provide useful scorekeeping systems for identifying and rewarding "winners" who have mastered the advanced abilities necessary for stardom in all these roles. Fortunately, there are statistical and psychometric techniques available to satisfy such requirements, although they are clearly beyond the scope of Dr. Lerner's article. I stress the need for them here, for they too are essential in realizing the goals of American education. . . .

HERMAN P. TAUB
Editor, *Competency Research Reports*
Bridgeport, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

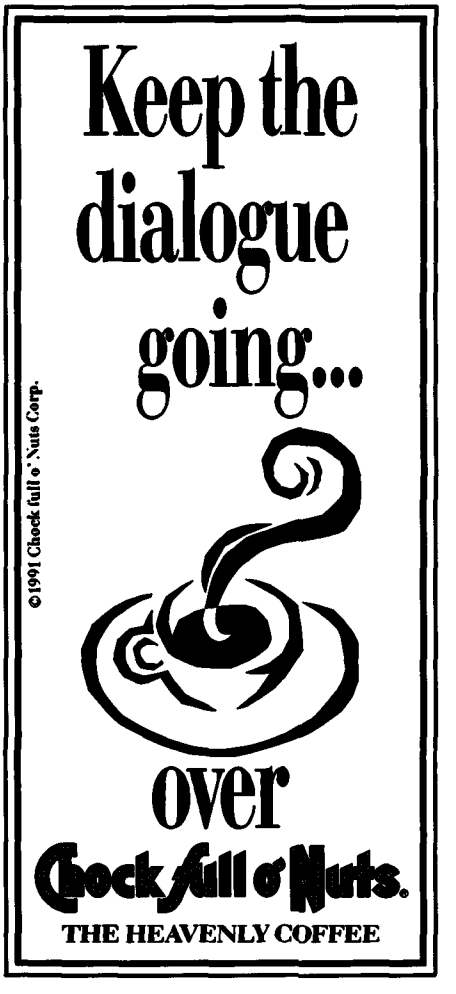
Let me add my support to Barbara Lerner. At least someone in the education community realizes that people respond to goals. It has become a truism in management that if you give people realizable goals and the means to achieve them, they respond by putting forth their full effort, and the same is true elsewhere. By all means make the standard for elementary-school graduation the MCT.

When people achieve something, they develop self-esteem. It seems strange that our high-school coaches know this and our academic experts do not. . . . In the military, for example, it becomes evident as you see various units of differing effectiveness, that the most effective units are also the sharpest looking (uniforms, haircuts, etc.). This grows out of a pride in doing a superior job and being part of a superior unit. If a unit merely inspects its people into looking sharp, it does not follow that it will produce superior performance. Similarly, esteem-building programs do not build results in education. . . .

RONALD G. BAILEY
Elen-Dilsen, Belgium

BARBARA LERNER writes:

I am glad to find some points of genuine agreement with Keith Geiger and Jane R. Mercer. We have been on opposite sides in the past. Mr. Geiger's teachers' union, the two-million-member National



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Education Association, lobbied for a ban on all standardized testing for more than a decade. Professor Mercer's testimony in *Larry P.* v. *Riles* helped get intelligence testing banned in California.

Professor Mercer says low test scores do not doom children to failure; what does the damage is being told that intensive effort and practice won't raise the scores. That is the main point of my article, and I'm so glad she agrees that I forgive her for not noticing that I said exactly that, over and over again. She says most critics of standardized testing "miss" this fundamental point. I argued that they do more than miss it; they drive home the fatal message, telling poor children, minority children, and girls: "You can't do any better on these bad, biased tests, and you don't have to, so don't keep working at it. Don't try." That is the message that dooms us to mediocrity, and I hope we can work together to counteract it.

I also agree with Mr. Geiger that we can and should spend less money on testing and more on other priorities, like seeing to it that all pre-schoolers get the nourishing food, medical care, and intellectual stimulation they need to get ready for school. Here, too, I favor minimum standards, and I think extending the reach of such support programs as WIC for women, infants, and children and Head Start to encompass every eligible child is such a standard. Right now, thousands who need and want this essential minimum help are turned away for lack of funds. Like Keith Geiger, Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and all true friends of American education, I find that unacceptable.

About spending less money on testing, Mr. Geiger is right again to see what a marvelous cash-cow grade-by-grade content testing is for all the people who make their living selling tests. My argument—that a single, general test of abstract-reasoning ability with words and with numbers will tell us more and cost us less than hundreds of new content tests—is not popular in test-producer circles, but it is true nonetheless.

Does this mean that Sandra Scarr and all the other scholars who argue for the importance of cultural content and the critical role of substantive knowledge in the development of intelligence are wrong? No, they are right, and I agree with them wholeheartedly. What I reject is the idea of a national test that specifies the precise content each American student must learn at each grade level. It's the difference between saying that all American students should learn something about American history, an obviously good idea, and saying they must all study the Revolutionary War in grade 6 and the Civil War in grade 7, a really bad idea, because it takes all initiative and discretion away from teachers, micromanaging classrooms and destroying any possibility of genuine professional accountability. Think, for example, about teachers who decide to teach the Peloponnesian War in grades 6 and 7, and our Revolutionary and Civil Wars in grades 9 and 10. There is every reason to believe their students will flunk an 8th-grade history test based on the first plan, but no reason at all to think they will leave school knowing less history than students whose teachers followed it.

With Gordon Harrington, Jerry Hirsch, and Gerald W. Bracey, I can find no common ground. Messrs. Harrington and Hirsch chide me for using inexact langauge in discussing dropout rates: their idea of a more precise term is "astronomical." Tendentious silliness aside, the facts are these: first, we have no really precise data on dropout rates because we have no consistent system for tracking students, no sure way of determining where they go when they leave a particular school. Some go no place; others go to other schools, academic or vocational, some in the same state, some in other states, and some in other countries. Different ways of collecting and classifying the very partial and imprecise data we do have produce different estimates of dropout rates. The most credible ones we have, from the U.S. Department of Education and the Census Bureau, suggest that the national rate, in the last two decades, has been somewhere between 20 and 30 percent, and that rates for black and Hispanic students were much higher. Local studies suggest that dropout rates in the 40- to 60-percent range were not uncommon in some communities, and may have been as high as 80 percent in a few.

The exact scope of the dropout problem may not be clear; its seriousness is. Everyone agrees that the dropout rate should be reduced, but the sad lesson of three decades worth of attempts to reduce it is that we haven't the foggiest idea of how to do it. Many of the best-intentioned and costliest efforts seem actually to have made the problem worse. Dire predictions to the contrary notwithstanding, there is no comparable evidence suggesting that the minimum-competence movement had that effect nationally, and data presented to the court by state officials testifying under oath in the *Debra P.* case indicate that in Florida the minimum-competence requirement had no significant impact on dropout rates. The percentage of graduates was the same, too low before the requirement was instituted, too low after. The difference was that many pre-minimum-competence graduates were illiterate; all post-minimum-competence graduates could read simple English and do simple arithmetic.

Messrs. Harrington and Hirsch grudgingly acknowledge that that was a good thing and agree that it should be done earlier, but argue that we should stop there because any further advance would dictate curriculum, destroy "diversity," and interfere with promotion "based on age not on academic performance." The advance I proposed—requiring literacy for grade-school graduation, abstract-reasoning ability for high-school graduation—dictates only the level, not the content, of what is taught. It allows for infinite diversity, but it is death on social promotion, and deservedly so. That pernicious practice was a major cause of the great American test-score decline of the 1960's and 70's. It must end if we are to make real progress.

Mr. Bracey denies the reality of the great American test-score decline, and blames it all on low-scoring poor, female, and minority students. A lot of people made that argument in the 1970's. Only ideologues still repeat it, because a ton of hard data proved it wrong. It showed that the big expansion in the percentage of American students going on to college accounts for part of the decline in the 1960's, but cannot begin to explain away the much larger decline in the 1970's, when our college-going population stabilized. But the real clincher is the fact that the declines were and are biggest at the top, so that the absolute number—not just the proportion, but the absolute number—of high-scoring students

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was lower in the 1980's than it was in the 1960's.

That is why Herbert London and Herbert C. Rudman are both right to insist that we need a higher ceiling as well as a higher floor. I agree; what I disagree with them about is the effect of raising the floor. They are afraid it will lower the ceiling; I believe it will raise it. I believe that because I believe in the robustness of the normal distribution, the familiar bell-shaped curve that emerges whenever we measure human abilities. My prediction is that it will continue to emerge, not collapse like a soufflé. If I am right, then the 750 SAT minimum for college entrance will define one tail of the distribution, the mean will be a standard deviation or two above that, and the usual number of students at the other tail will be one or two standard deviations higher still. That would raise our ceiling as well as our floor, and that is what I think will happen, if the minimum standards I advocate are adopted nationwide.

Mr. London is right about the top of our current distribution, but he is wrong about the bottom. SAT 700 is not an easy entrance standard for college athletes to meet; the NCAA is under heavy pressure to drop it. My proposal would raise it to 750, and make it apply to all college entrants, not just athletes. We need to do that because we are in big trouble at both ends of the distribution, and in the middle, too. We need to lift the whole bell; and that is what my proposal is designed to do.

Alan C. Purves's letter disappoints me. I expect better from him because he was more open and honest about the results of international tests than most of his IEA colleagues in the 1970's. Like Mr. Rudman and Lloyd G. Humphries, he is a psychometrician, an expert in an arcane field that is Greek to most educational policymakers. I am not a psychometrician, but I have struggled long and painfully to grasp the essential information that scores from good tests give us. I do that because I think that trying to make educational policy recommendations without such information is like trying to drive a car at night without turning your headlights on. Headlights, of course, don't tell you everything you'd like to know, but they beat the alternative handily. This time, Mr. Purves shines no lights; he offers the smoke and mirrors of standard "ed-biz" language and logic instead. It all translates into three propositions that everyone who cares about American education should learn to recognize and reject, because they guarantee the failure of any serious reform effort.

Proposition 1 is that our tests should reflect only what is taught in particular schools at particular points in time, no matter how grossly inadequate they may be to the post-school realities of our students' lives and our country's future. They should not give students, teachers, parents, or policymakers honest, accurate feedback about how our students measure up against real-world standards.

Why should we do something as slavish, senseless, and self-defeating as that? Because, Proposition 2 tells us, to do anything else is to penalize students for the failures of pedagogues and test-makers. What this handy cop-out formula ignores, of course, is the fact that a good score on a bad test won't protect our students or our country from the much more severe penalties life imposes on graduates who are not equipped to deal with the real world, and on countries that produce such graduates.

Proposition 3—that "the problem is that we refuse to acknowledge a two-tier system"—is the standard "ed-biz" euphemism for saying you can't teach these lower-tier dummies any higher-order skills, so don't try, and don't test for them, not with this group anyway. Just write them off, and settle for making advanced competence the province of a small elite. Moral outrage aside, there are two main problems with this worst of all propositions, one practical, one scientific. The practical problem is that our economic competitors are doing much better than this. Japan, to cite only the most obvious example, currently graduates about 90 percent of its high-school-age students, and all of them graduate with advanced competence. The scientific problem is that there is no empirical basis for the claim that American students cannot do as well. The plain truth is that we do not know because we have not tried, and unless and until we do, by setting an advanced-competence standard and making a sustained effort to get every student to meet it, it makes no scientific sense to insist that it cannot be done. In scientific terms, all I am asking for is a fair empirical test. In human terms, that translates into "for God's sake, let's give these kids a chance." After all, the standard "ed-biz" line was that they could not meet the minimum-competence standard either, and, as Mr. Purves notes in the second, more sensible half of his letter, they did.

Lloyd G. Humphries, the third psychometrician in this group, is one of the few brave souls who joined Herbert C. Rudman and two other lonely test experts, Robert Ebel and Ronald Edmonds, in insisting from the outset that the minimum-competence movement should be given a chance, and in reporting honestly and accurately on its excellent results. More, he is the only one who noticed that I made an error in reporting the size of minority gains on the SAT from 1980 to 1989. I want to thank him for pointing it out to me, to apologize for the error, and to correct it forthwith. Minority gains in this period were substantial, majority gains were not, and the absolute numbers I gave in my article were correct: black scores rose by 47 points, Mexican-American scores by 26 points, Puerto Rican scores by 22 points, and Asian-American scores by 29 points. My error came in translating those absolute numbers into standard-deviation (SD) units. There, I confused the number of points that constitute an SD on the total combined SAT with the number that does that on each of the two halves of the test, verbal and mathematical. The result is that on the total test, the rise in standard-deviation units is actually only about half what I said it was. For black students it is about a quarter of an SD; for Asian and Hispanic students, it is less. This is still a good start on the road to real educational reform, but not as good as my initial analysis indicated.

No matter, we can do better, much better, and the letters of Sheldon Seller, Herman P. Taub, and Ronald G. Bailey strengthen my faith that we can. Mr. Taub's useful research and Mr. Bailey's apt observations provide additional empirical support for my conclusion that the old "self-esteem-now" strategies will not help us reach our goals; Mr. Seller's willingness, as a college teacher, to do what needs to be done, even though grammar-school and high-school teachers

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should have done the job long before the students he describes ever got to him, puts all the buck-passers to shame. I say bravo, and thanks.

Before closing, I want to focus on the anomalies Mr. Humphries points to in the NAEP data on higher-level skills that the Educational Testing Service (ETS) has reported. His questions about that data are significant ones. I have no answers, only more questions. That is why I did not rely on NAEP for anything other than basic literacy data, and even there, I would not be comfortable if I had not seen independently confirmatory data from a number of separate state tests. Only ETS can answer Mr. Humphries's questions about whether higher-level NAEP tests reflect reality accurately or not. I think they have an obligation to answer them because NAEP tests were commissioned and paid for by American taxpayers, to get the information they need to make fact-based decisions about our schools. Answering questions like those Mr. Humphries raises is part of that obligation.

ETS is not the only test-maker whose data contain puzzling anomalies. IEA researchers have long claimed, as Mr. Purves does in his letter, that their data show no real decline at the top. If that is really true, then they need to explain why a decline that shows up clearly on the SAT, the ACT tests, and a host of other reliable indicators fails to manifest itself on their tests. It is not enough just to reiterate the claim and ignore all the contrary evidence. An explanation is required, and Mr. Purves's insistence that the proportion of high scorers is the same, even though the absolute numbers are lower, makes no sense to me, because the total number of test-takers is larger. The point of all this is that we need better reporting of test results as well as better schools, and we are not likely to get the latter until we insist on the former.

Reaganomics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Paul Craig Roberts is guilty of gross revisionism or amnesia in "What Everyone Knows About Reaganomics" [February]. He claims that no Reagan-adminstration official or supply-sider ever said tax cuts would generate sufficient revenue to finance themselves. Mr. Roberts in his own book, *The Supply-Side Revolution* (1984), contrasts the policy of Keynesians and Democrats with that of Kemp, Roth, and other supply-side Republicans. He writes, "Whenever Republicans talked about cutting taxes, the Democrats would encourage their natural inclinations to pay for tax cuts with spending cuts." On the other hand, he writes a few pages farther on, "Supply-side economics brought a new perspective to fiscal policy. . . . As people respond to high after-tax rewards . . . incomes rise and the tax base grows, thus feeding back some of the lost revenues to the Treasury."

David Stockman in his book, *The Triumph of Politics*, is very explicit about the role of the "Laffer curve" in Reagan's thinking. Kemp, Laffer, and Jude Wanniski told Reagan about Laffer's ideas and, according to Stockman, "It set off a symphony in his ears. He knew instantly that it was true and would never doubt it for a moment." Stockman recounts a crucial presentation made to Reagan on August 3, 1981 during which he predicted the enormous deficits that would result from the recently passed tax cuts. He concludes with the following observation: "The whole California gang had taken it literally (and primitively). The way they talked, they seemed to expect that once the supply-side tax cut was in effect, additional revenue would start to fall, manna-like, from the heavens."

While some knowledgeable supply-side analysts may not have accepted the self-adjusting tax-cut thesis, Reagan and most of the cabinet, at least publicly, swallowed the Laffer-curve conclusions hook, line, and sinker.

After trying to show that the Reagan administration did not accept the naive formulation of the Laffer curve, which Stockman believes it did, Mr. Roberts turns to the root causes of the tax cut. He claims that the budget deficit resulted from twin failures, on both the spending and revenue side. According to him, spending rose due to congressional actions (read Democrats) and revenues were below forecast because inflation was sharply reduced.

Behind this analysis is the naive view that both domestic and foreign investors would not demand higher interest rates to compensate them for eroding purchasing power resulting from potential budget-deficit-induced inflation. The impact of higher interest rates collapsed the economy, resulting in one of the worst recessions of the 20th century, trashing the revenue forecast in the budget. One impact of the interest-rate spike was that housing demand plummeted from 1.6 million starts during the Carter years to under 1 million in 1981, creating untold havoc in the real-estate industry. Furthermore, the prime rate rose to the highest level in the century: 21 percent in July 1981, more than three times higher than during Carter's first two years. Of course, Mr. Roberts has claimed that large deficits do not cause high interest rates. He would no doubt believe that high interest rates were caused by the Democrats because they fantasized about new social-spending initiatives. In conclusion, the assumption of self-financing budget cuts fueled the Reagan administration's early expositions, as Stockman reveals, and it was this error that led to the enormous deficits, high interest rates, and possibly to Mr. Roberts's departure from the administration.

Mr. Roberts's discussion of the trade deficit again glosses over the impact of the budget deficits on interest rates and the dollar. The dollar soared as foreigners took advantage of the Reagan windfall to investors by piling into U.S. government bonds. The result was a collapse in exports, but also a net capital inflow in the balance-of-payments accounts. Mr. Roberts believes that the tax cut raised after-tax earnings on real investment, rather than raising interest rates. However, during the Reagan years, the "real" involved here was not in plant and equipment, to make America more productive, but rather in interest rates after inflation adjustment, as real interest rates soared. Wall Street gave a "Bronx cheer" to all debt instruments as the deficit became apparent.

Later, Mr. Roberts says (incredibly for a trained economist), that "this collapse in U.S. capital outflow . . . created the large trade deficit, which by definition is a mirror image of capital surplus." The trade deficit was created by the incredibly high dollar which devastated U.S. exports as foreigners bid up dollars to invest in 14 percent U.S. government bonds. For instance, in 1981 and 1982, because of the high dollar, it was cheaper for American aluminum companies to ship ingot to Japan for

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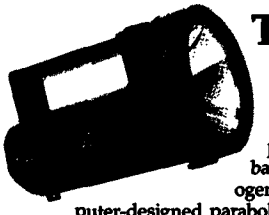

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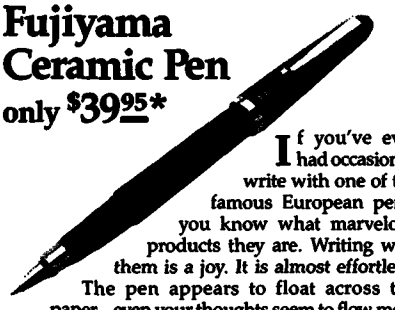

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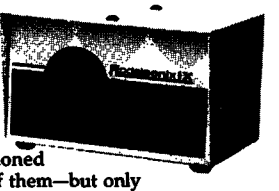

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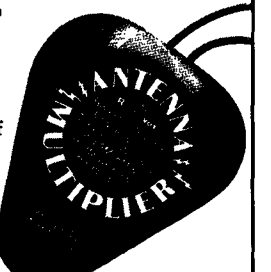

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processing into sheet for the U.S. market than to roll sheet here. The budget deficit ravaged the Midwestern-machine-tools, equipment, and metal-bending industries. The merchandise trade imbalance had to be financed as it was. In addition, our capital surplus was settled separately and was due to foreigners attracted by high interest rates.

At the end of his article, Mr. Roberts misinforms us on the facts dealing with the decline in real investment in the early 1980's. It is clear that productivity fell, employment in the capital goods-producing industries fell, the average age of equipment rose, and, in general, except for construction, the period was dismal for capital spending. The wonder in the article is why it was written. For many citizens and business leaders Reaganomics in retrospect was a political slogan and not a serious prescription for the management of our economic affairs.

ARTHUR M. STUPAY
Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is most gratifying to see Paul Craig Roberts . . . debunking that old straw man, the purportedly self-financing tax cut. I wish I had a nickel for every use of that old canard. . . .

However, I wish Mr. Roberts had gone on to discuss the degree to which the tax cut was *partially* self-financing. The straw-man assertion (100 percent self-financing) was set up in false opposition to static analysis (0 percent self-financing), in order to bolster the latter. But though the former was false, the latter is grossly implausible: if tax cuts did not stimulate *some* increment to reported taxable economic activity, then the law of demand has a colossal counter-example, and all price-theory textbooks must be revised at once.

One critical question is: by what fraction, between 0 percent and 100 percent, was the tax cut self-financing? That is, by what fraction did actual revenue exceed static-analysis projections? Only the short-term fraction can be measured, because rates were so soon changed again; but the short-term fraction at least provides an indication for what the long-term fraction would have been.

Another critical question is: what was that fraction for each level of income (or level of earned income, or level of unearned income, or other relevant subgrouping)? Perhaps the cut *was* 100 percent self-financing above some particular level, after properly accounting for the greater number of people above it due to rate-cut-stimulated commerce. Were that demonstrable, it might greatly discomfit the latest generation of "soak-the-rich" demagogues.

Can Mr. Roberts supply us with these vital data?

ROBERTO ALAZAR
Reseda, California

PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS writes:

Arthur M. Stupay is obviously a supply-side sympathizer in disguise serving me easy pitches. His quotations from my book do not support his charges, and David Stockman's hyperbole is irrelevant. What if "the whole California gang" believed the 1981 tax-rate reduction would pay for itself in revenue reflows? The Reagan government's forecast assumed the exact opposite. Since the government officially predicted that the tax reduction would lose 100 percent of the revenues, the deficit obviously cannot be blamed on a Laffer-curve forecast.

Mr. Stupay's other assertions are also unsupported and his proffered analysis is inconsistent with the actual sequence of events. The high interest rates preceded the budget deficits, and both preceded the tax-rate reductions, which were not implemented until mid-1982 and mid-1983. The high interest rates reflected the double-digit inflation rates during President Carter's last two years in office and the Federal Reserve's stringent monetary policy to combat the inflation. If Mr. Stupay will consult the official statistical table on page 368 of the 1991 *Economic Report of the President*, he will see that interest rates peaked in 1981, thereafter falling as the deficit rose. Indeed, he might consult pages 177-78 of my book that he cites. Far from giving "a 'Bronx cheer' to all debt instruments as the deficit became apparent," Wall Street bought them greedily as they soared in value. Today the budget deficit both in absolute terms and as a percentage of GNP is substantially higher than Reagan's former record, and interest rates have fallen.

Mr. Stupay's understanding of the trade deficit is equally uninformed. There is no doubt that the dollar rose strongly during 1982, 1983, 1984, and 1985, but this was a period of falling interest rates. Interest rates were higher during 1979, 1980, and 1981 when the dollar was lower. The dollar's rise corresponds to a collapse in U.S. capital outflows during Reagan's first term. All trained economists know that the current account is a mirror image of the capital surplus. If Mr. Stupay will consult the official balance-of-payments statistics, he can verify for himself that our capital surplus was most certainly *not* due to "foreigners attracted by high interest rates." The balance of payments shows clearly that foreign capital inflows to the U.S. did not increase until the latter part of 1985 when interest rates were falling and long after the appearance of "the twin deficits."

Mr. Stupay's speculations about my departure from the Treasury are as uninformed as the rest of his letter. I accomplished my own and the President's goals and had no interest in riding around in limousines and airplanes at public expense for the next seven years. I departed with the Treasury's Meritorious Service Award for "outstanding contributions to the formulation of United States economic policy" and with a handwritten thank-you from President Reagan.

I am not as optimistic as Roberto Alazar that demagogues are affected by facts, but the facts he requests are pertinent. In his book, *The Growth Experiment* (Basic Books, 1990), Lawrence B. Lindsey, a Harvard economics professor recently nominated to the Federal Reserve Board, reports that the 1981 tax-rate reduction recovered 70 percent of the revenues by 1985. He reports that half of the revenues were recovered as a result of demand-side effects and half from supply-side and pecuniary effects. He defines pecuniary effects as tax-driven financial decisions such as choosing between taxable and tax-exempt bonds or between cash and fringes in salary negotiations. Generally, supply-siders include pecuniary responses when they emphasize the self-financing aspects of tax-rate reduction.

Mr. Lindsey also reports that the reduction in the top tax rate from 70 to 50 percent more than paid for itself. Those whose tax rates were cut "from a range of 54-69 percent to a range of 38-50 percent paid about 92 percent of what they

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would have paid under the old law." "Only middle-class and working-class taxpayers paid substantially less taxes under the new law."

Poles and Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In the course of Maurice Friedberg's article about his visit to Poland in the summer of last year ["In Poland Again," November 1990], Mr. Friedberg describes a meeting he attended under the auspices of the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia (*Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej, KIK*) in Warsaw. At this meeting, Mr. Friedberg gave an informal talk, substituting for Marek Edelman, who had been scheduled to lecture on the subject of "What It Is Like to Be a Jew in Poland." Since I am secretary of the *KIK* and presided at the event, I would like to correct some inaccuracies in Mr. Friedberg's account.

Mr. Friedberg writes that at the end of his talk, a young man got up and reported an anti-Semitic remark that had been made in his hearing by a Warsaw priest. According to Mr. Friedberg, the audience remained silent upon hearing this remark, and there were no expressions of disapproval. This is certainly the case. But please believe me when I say that the meaning of the audience's silence was deep embarrassment and great shame that such occurrences could take place in a Polish church. It did not signify approval of the clergyman's remark.

Again, Mr. Friedberg writes that during the discussion period following the talk, many people got up to speak but "among all the participants in the discussion only two [were] friendly." This is completely untrue, and conveys a totally distorted impression. As the secretary of the club I hereby state that Mr. Friedberg was definitely welcomed by most of the people there in a very warm and friendly way. The whole tenor of the meeting attested to the fact that most of the audience condemned anti-Semitism. I should emphasize, however, that since this meeting was open to the general public, there could have been some people in the audience who, to the pain and shame of Poland, do harbor anti-Semitic attitudes.

I should like to stress that *KIK*, ever since its beginnings in 1956, has done everything possible to further Polish-Jewish relations. It was the youth of *KIK* who for many years took care of the Warsaw Jewish cemetery; it was *KIK* which organized the "Days of Jewish Culture"; it was at *KIK* that the Society for Polish-Jewish friendship began its activities two years ago; it was at *KIK* that the well-known Polish priest, Waldemar Chrostowski, held his lectures on the subject of Christian-Jewish dialogue; it was under *KIK* auspices that members of parliament and *KIK* activists protested the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, initiated by the Communists and led by Wladislaw Gomulka.

This is not the place to reply in detail to Mr. Friedberg's charges against the Polish Catholic Church, but permit me to call your attention to the Polish bishops' pastoral letter that was read out not long ago in all the churches of Poland. In the letter the bishops said:

> We are especially disheartened by those among the Catholics who, in some way, were the cause of the death of Jews. They will forever gnaw at our conscience on the social plane. If only one Christian could have helped and did not stretch out a helping hand to a Jew during the time of danger, or caused his death, we must ask forgiveness of our Jewish brothers and sisters. . . .
>
> We express our sincere regret for all the incidents of anti-Semitism which were committed at any time or by any person on Polish soil.

The Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia is entirely in agreement with this declaration. I take issue with Mr. Friedberg's oversensitive and somewhat hysterical account of our meeting; to link the name of our organization in any way with incidents of an anti-Semitic nature does us a grave injustice. . . .

STANISLAW LATEK
Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej
Warsaw, Poland

MAURICE FRIEDBERG writes:

The Polish bishops' praiseworthy pastoral letter was issued long after my visit to Poland, in fact subsequent to the publication of my article. Otherwise, I would have certainly referred to it.

The Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia does, indeed, have a well-known and admirable record of combating Jew-hatred.

I also agree with Stanislaw Latek that a meeting on the subject of Jews in Poland was likely to have attracted "some people who, to the pain and shame of Poland, do harbor anti-Semitic attitudes." It is, indeed, highly probable that they were the ones who showered me with hostile questions. Let readers decide whether my report of them was overly hysterical. I certainly did not mean to imply that the men and women who came over to talk after the meeting at the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia were unfriendly. Most were, in fact, very gracious, as were scores of Poles I met during my trip. I wish them and their country well.

This said, I must take exception to Mr. Latek's estimate of the deafening silence that followed one man's eyewitness account of an outrageous anti-Semitic sermon in a Warsaw church. In Mr. Latek's view, the silence attested to "deep embarrassment and great shame." Are we to understand that the vocal anti-Semites in the audience were also embarrassed and shamed? For they, too, remained silent. There are situations when silence should be avoided, lest it be interpreted as indifference, acquiescence, or approval.

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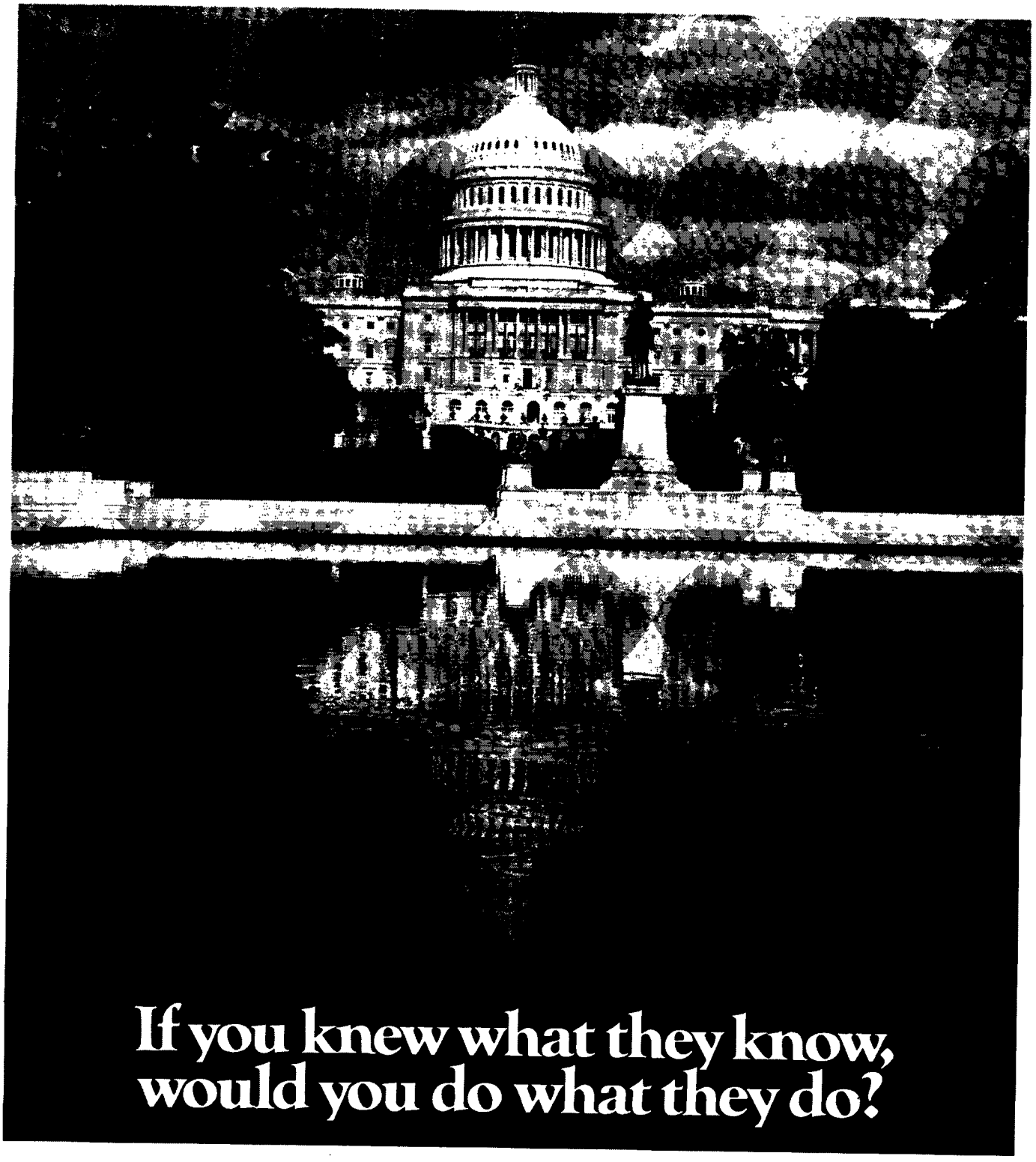

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The Future of American Jewry

Irving Kristol

For no other American ethnic group has the immigrant experience, including the experience of "Americanization," remained so vivid as for the Jews. Neither the Irish, the Italians, nor the Germans have produced a literature about this experience that is in any way comparable, in sheer bulk as in literary scope and scholarly depth. It is almost a century since the majority of Jews arrived on these shores, but the memories remain fresh—memories of economic hardship and economic success; of acculturation, assimilation, and the accompanying generational tensions; of triumphs and disappointments—sending your children to the nation's best universities and then watching them marry non-Jews.

Even in Israel, where immigration is so much more recent and the experience so much more traumatic, the past does not seem to be so present, so alive, so much in need of constant attention. The reason, of course, is that Jews in Israel feel that what immigration has done is to bring them "home." They do not doubt that they are where they ought to be, that the immigration experience is a narrative that comes to a proper—perhaps even a predestined—ending. American Jews have no such sense of an ending. For them, the immigration experience continues, and it continues because they cannot decide whether or not America is "home." They think that it is wonderful to be here, have no intention whatsoever of leaving for Israel or anywhere else, foresee their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren as Americans—but somehow the idea of America as their "homeland" is one they find too slippery to cope with.

Not that they think they are in exile. An American Jew who goes to Israel, or who subscribes to the weekly edition of the Jerusalem *Post*, hears the status of American Jews described casually as "living in *galut*," "residing in the Diaspora." He hears those cant phrases but does not really listen to them. He has no sense whatsoever of living in *galut* or in something called the Diaspora—terms that American Jews under the age of twenty-five are not likely to comprehend. Indeed, it is probable that even among Israelis, those terms as applied to American Jews are by now empty of meaning, and are little more than linguistic survivals. Where, then, do American Jews live?

The answer, I would suggest, is that most American Jews see themselves as living in an imaginary country called "America." It was this imaginary country to which they immigrated—in this respect they certainly differed from other immigrants—and their long "immigrant experience" is a narrative of how they coped with living in two countries at once: an ideal America and an all-too-real America. It is this extraordinary phenomenon that accounts for so many specific and unique features of America Jewry—the powerful inclination to liberal politics as well as the strident "alienation" visible, for a century now, of Jewish intellectuals, writers, and artists. There is a Yiddish expression that used to be in common usage, *America goniff*, literally "America the thief," but in context meaning something like: "This is a wonderful country that takes as it gives." And so it does—as does life itself.

This dual life of American Jews was made possible by the fact that the ideal America and the actual America were in so many important respects convergent. The ideal America was (and is) indeed a homeland for American Jews, and the real America was sufficiently responsive to this ideal to encourage Jews to think of themselves as living in a homeland that existed *in potentia* if not yet in fact. The discrepancy between ideal and real, however, was always there, and existed to a degree that provoked Jews to a nervous and somewhat uneasy affirmation, as distinct from an easy-going and unequivocal one such as is to be found among other immigrant groups.

Most American Jews today are convinced—one should perhaps say they have persuaded themselves—that the trend toward convergence is stronger than ever. That is why they show signs of near-hysteria at any sign that suggests the contrary. The American Jewish community today is comfortable, secure, but lacking in self-confidence. It shows frequent symptoms of hypochon-

Irving Kristol is publisher of the *National Interest*, co-editor of the *Public Interest*, and the author of, among other books, *Two Cheers for Capitalism* and *Reflections of a Neoconservative*. His articles in Commentary include "Liberalism & American Jews" (October 1988) and "The Political Dilemma of American Jews" (July 1984).

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dria and neurasthenia. It is a community very vulnerable to its own repressed anxieties and self-doubts.

It is right to be anxious because there are clear portents that we may, in fact, be entering an age of *divergence*, one in which the ideal America of the Jews will become more distant from the real America. But to get an insight into the processes of convergence and divergence, one must have a clear understanding of the fundamental forces at work. That understanding, it seems to me, is lacking because analysts of American Jewry look at their subject with a European paradigm in mind. But the United States is an exceptional country, and Jewish history elsewhere throws very little light on the American Jewish experience in the 20th century.

WHAT is it, precisely, that has defined this experience? Can one call it "assimilation"? The word itself seems so inappropriate that, while used freely to apply to German or French or British Jews, it is not used nearly so often to refer to their American counterparts. "Assimilation" suggests a strong, longstanding national culture, with a marked Christian complexion, into which Jews melt as they shed their distinctly Jewish characteristics. One of these characteristics, of course, is religion. That is why "assimilation" is generally associated with conversion to Christianity, either formal or informal (i.e., "passing" for a Christian without benefit of conversion). We have seen something like this happening in a relatively small percentage of the American Jewish population, but the overwhelming majority do not fit this mold. For "Americanization" is not at all the same thing as "assimilation." Nor is it the same thing as "acculturation." If American Jews, in the course of the 20th century, have been "acculturated," so have all other Americans. American Jews have not changed more during this period than have American Catholics and American Protestants, of whatever ethnic group. Moreover, they have all moved, gradually but ineluctably, in the same direction.

What is this direction? Toward a far greater religious toleration, obviously, which has cheered all Jewish hearts. But what, more exactly, has been the basis for this extraordinary (by all historical standards) flowering of religious toleration? Here two explanations are commonly offered, one seemingly anachronistic, the other lacking in self-understanding.

The first explanation has to do with the historical origins of religious toleration in the United States. It is a matter of record that such toleration emerged out of the struggle of various Protestant sects for the freedom publicly to express their religious views and to have their constituents and their religious establishments free from official discrimination. This is what happened in the 18th century and the first half of the 19th. It is fair to say, along with Richard John Neuhaus, that religious tolerance in the United States originally derives from the tension among a multiplicity of religious allegiances.

But after the Civil War, and especially after 1900, a quite different climate of tolerance gradually developed. This had to do with a decline of religious intensity overall and with the growing popularity of the view that "religion is a private affair," by which is meant a purely personal affair. Toleration became a matter of relations among persons, not among religious denominations. Indeed, individuals and communities that seemed "excessively" interested in their religious beliefs and allowed these beliefs to shape their lives in uncommon ways were (and still are) regarded as somewhat "deviant," and sometimes even alien to "the American creed." This "American creed," now frequently referred to as our "civic religion," is a superficial and syncretistic compound of Judeo-Christian moral traditions with as much religious specificity as possible washed out. It is what John Dewey, the quintessential American philosopher of our century, meant by his phrase, "a common faith," an overriding, nondenominational faith to which all denominations are loyal and subservient. This common faith is what we have come to call "liberalism," its exemplary institution being the American Civil Liberties Union. To the extent that such a common faith has prevailed, religious tolerance is not an issue worthy of debate. It simply makes no sense not to be tolerant.

Historians call this phase of our intellectual history, now more than a century old, "secularization," and they point to analogous developments in other lands to sustain the thesis that secularization is an integral part of modernization. It is impossible to argue with this thesis, for which the evidence is overwhelming. But it is possible and legitimate to question the explanatory power of the concept of secularization. Something important happened, that is certain. Secularization is doubtless as good a shorthand term as any to *describe* what happened. It is not, however, a useful concept if one wishes to *explain* what happened. For what we call secularization is an idea that only makes sense from a point of view that regards traditional religions as survivals that can, at best, be adapted to a nonreligious society.

WHEN we look at secularization without an ideological *parti pris*, we can fairly—and more accurately, I would suggest—describe it as the victory of a new, emergent religious impulse over the traditional biblical religions that formed the framework of Western civilization. Nor is there any mystery as to the identity of this new religious impulse. It is named, fairly and accurately, secular humanism. Merely because it incorporates the word "secular" in its

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self-identification does not mean that it cannot be seriously viewed as a competitive religion—though its adherents resent and resist any such ascription. Such resentment and resistance are, of course, a natural consequence of seeing the human world through "secularist" spectacles. Because secular humanism has, from the very beginning, incorporated the modern scientific view of the universe, it has always felt itself—and today still feels itself—"liberated" from any kind of religious perspective. But secular humanism is more than science, because it proceeds to make all kinds of inferences about the human condition and human possibilities that are not, in any authentic sense, scientific. Those inferences are metaphysical, and in the end theological.

There really is such a thing as secular humanism. The fact that many fundamentalist Protestants attack it in a mindless way, making it a kind of shibboleth, does not mean that it is, as some have been blandly saying, a straw man. It is not a straw man. As any respectable text in European intellectual history relates, "humanism," in the form of "Christian humanism," was born in the Renaissance, as a major shift occurred from an other-worldly to a this-worldly focus, and as a revived interest in Greco-Roman thought shouldered aside the narrow Christian-Aristotelian rationalism endorsed by the Church. At the same time, the Protestant Reformation weakened the Church as a religious institution and therewith undermined religious, intellectual, and moral authority in general. Christian humanism, moreover, did not long survive the near-simultaneous emergence of modern scientific modes of thinking about natural phenomena. By 1600, secular humanism as a coherent outlook was well-defined—Francis Bacon exemplifies it perfectly—though it was careful not to expose itself too candidly, lest it attract hostility from still-powerful religious establishments, Protestant as well as Catholic.

What, specifically, were (and are) the teachings of this new philosophical-spiritual impulse? They can be summed up in one phrase: "Man makes himself." That is to say, the universe is bereft of transcendental meaning, it has no inherent teleology, and it is within the power of humanity to comprehend natural phenomena and to control and manipulate them so as to improve the human estate. Creativity, once a divine prerogative, becomes a distinctly human one. It is in this context that the modern idea of progress is born, and the modern reality of "progressive" societies takes shape. These are societies dominated, not by tradition, but by a spirit of what F. A. Hayek calls "constructivism"—the self-confident application of rationality to all human problems, individual and social alike.

What is "secular" about this movement is the fact that, though many people still go to church or synagogue for psychological reasons (consolation, hope, fear), very few educated people actually think that their immortal souls are at stake as a result of their beliefs or actions. Man's immortal soul has been a victim of progress, replaced by the temporal "self"—which he explores in such sciences as psychology and neurology, as well as in the modern novel, modern poetry, and modern psychology, all of which proceed without benefit of what, in traditional terms, was regarded as a religious dimension.

It is secular humanism that is the orthodox metaphysical-theological basis of the two modern political philosophies, socialism and liberalism. The two are continuous across the secular-humanist spectrum, with socialism being an atheistic, messianic extreme while liberalism is an agnostic, melioristic version. (This continuity explains why modern liberalism cannot help viewing its disagreement with socialism—with the "Left"—as a kind of family quarrel.) Nor is it only modern politics that has been so shaped. Christianity and Judaism have been infiltrated and profoundly influenced by the spirit of secular humanism. There are moments when, listening to the sermons of bishops, priests, and rabbis, one has the distinct impression that Christianity and Judaism today are, for the most part, different traditional vehicles for conveying, in varying accents, the same (or at least very similar) sentiments and world views. Of other-worldly views there is very little expression, except among the minority who are discredited (and dismissed) as "fundamentalist" or "ultra-Orthodox."

The impact of secular humanism on European Jews was far more striking than among Christians. It was the secular-humanist Left, after all, that agitated for (and won) Jewish emancipation and Jewish civic equality. Moreover, emancipation unleashed within the Jewish community latent messianic passions that pointed to a new era of fraternal "universalism" of belief for mankind. What is now called "prophetic Judaism" gradually edged out "rabbinic Judaism"—the distinction itself being a derivative of the secular-humanist impulse. By the time the mass of Jews, mostly Central and East European, came to the United States, they were already secular-humanist in their politics, i.e., somewhere Left of Center—if not in other respects. And, in time, as American Christianity and American culture also absorbed this secular-humanist impulse, Jews were encouraged to become more secular-humanist in other respects as well. They located themselves on the cutting edge of American acculturation to secular humanism as an integral part of their own Americanization.

THAT Jews should be liberal-to-Left in American politics is not surprising: they always have been so, and were ready to be so from the moment they set foot on these shores. What scholars and analysts take to be more interesting is that they remain so, even as they have

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prospered and achieved socioeconomic levels that, according to the socioeconomic determinism of contemporary sociology, should have made them more conservative. Aside from the fact that such determinism is always intellectually flawed to begin with, this overlooks the far more interesting phenomenon that American Jews have not only refused to become more conservative but have actually become more liberal-Left in their thinking about nonpolitical issues—what we today call "social" issues.

Take the question of abortion. The American people are divided on this issue, with 20 percent or so on the permissive "Left," another 20 percent on the restrictive "Right," and the majority flopping about in between these extremes. Jews, over the years, have moved disproportionately close to the permissive pole. Why? Why on earth should Hadassah or the National Council of Jewish Women be so passionately in favor of a woman's "freedom to choose"? There is absolutely nothing in the Jewish tradition that favors such a radical inclination. Nor is there anything in the experience of most American Jewish women that would explain it. (Out-of-wedlock births among American Jews are among the lowest in the nation, and married Jewish women are expert at birth control.) It is purely an ideological phenomenon, a reflection of the power of secular humanism within the Jewish community. After all, if "man makes himself," why should he (or she) not have the authority to unmake himself, if it is convenient to do so? Abortion (except in cases of endangerment to the life of the mother) was long forbidden to Jews for religious reasons. Today, it is taken to be permitted to Jews (always excepting the Orthodox) for religious reasons—but not Jewish religious reasons. Jews in America may belong to Jewish institutions, send their children to Sunday schools for Jewish instruction, proudly identify themselves as Jews—but their religion, for the most part, is only Jewish in its externals. At the core it is secular humanist.

Dedication to secular humanism is so congenial to American Jews because it has assured them of an unparalleled degree of comfort and security. It has done so because Christians in America have been moving in exactly the same direction, if more tardily. A secular-humanist America is "good for Jews" since it makes nonsense of anti-Semitism, and permits individual Jews a civic equality and equality of opportunity undreamed of by previous Jewish generations. It is natural, therefore, for American Jews to be, not only accepting of secular-humanist doctrines, but enthusiastic exponents. That explains why American Jews are so vigilant about removing all the signs and symbols of traditional religions from "the public square," so insistent that religion be merely a "private affair," so determined that separation of church and state be interpreted to mean the separation of all institutions from any signs of a connection with traditional religions. The spread of secular humanism throughout American life has been "good for Jews," no question about it. So the more, the better.

Well, perhaps this is a time for questioning whether more is better, and even whether what has been "good for Jews" will continue to be so. After all, the greatest single threat to the Jewish community today is not anti-Semitism but intermarriage, at a 30-40 percent rate. The Reform and Conservative rabbinates confront this problem with strong talk about the importance of Jewish survival. But it is absurd to think that young Jews, as individuals, are going to make their marital decisions on the basis of ancestral piety—a theme that modern rationalism cannot take seriously. Even if these young Jews approve of Jewish survival, as many do, they find it easy to assign this particular task to others. And, of course, there are an awful lot of Jews, young and not-so-young, who are less interested in Jewish survival than in the universal sovereignty of secular humanism, under which sovereignty Jews and Christians can live in fraternal peace, even though some may persist in older religious rituals which they find to have a therapeutic value as they cope with the stresses of secular modernity. One sees many such Jews in Reform and Conservative synagogues during the High Holidays.

But it is becoming ever more clear that what we are witnessing is not the advent of a brave new world in which religious orientation, like sexual orientation, will be largely a matter of taste. We are seeing, rather, the end of a major phase of American Jewish history, and of the history of Western civilization itself. American Jews, living in their suburban cocoons, are likely to be the last to know what is happening to them.

WE HAVE, in recent years, observed two major events that represent turning points in the history of the 20th century. The first is the death of socialism, both as an ideal and a political program, a death that has been duly recorded in our consciousness. The second is the collapse of secular humanism—the religious basis of socialism—as an ideal, but not yet as an ideological program, a way of life. The emphasis is on "not yet," for as the ideal is withering away, the real will sooner or later follow suit.

If one looks back at the intellectual history of this century, one sees the rationalist religion of secular humanism gradually losing its credibility even as it marches triumphantly through the institutions of our society—through the schools, the courts, the churches, the media. This loss of credibility flows from two fundamental flaws in secular humanism.

First, the philosophical rationalism of secular humanism can, at best, provide us with a statement of the necessary assumptions of a moral code, but it cannot deliver any such code itself. Moral codes evolve from the moral experience of

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communities, and can claim authority over behavior only to the degree that individuals are reared to look respectfully, even reverentially, on the moral traditions of their forefathers. It is the function of religion to instill such respect and reverence. Morality does not belong to a scientific mode of thought, or to a philosophical mode, or even to a theological mode, but to a practical-juridical mode. One accepts a moral code on faith—not on blind faith but on the faith that one's ancestors, over the generations, were not fools and that we have much to learn from them and their experience. Pure reason can offer a critique of moral beliefs but it cannot engender them.

For a long time now, the Western world has been leading a kind of schizophrenic existence, with a prevailing moral code inherited from the Judeo-Christian tradition and a set of secular-humanist beliefs about the nature and destiny of man to which that code is logically irrelevant. Inevitably, belief in the moral code has become more and more attenuated over time, as we have found ourselves baffled by the Nietzschean challenge: if God is really dead, by what authority do we say any particular practice is prohibited or permitted? Pure reason alone cannot tell us that incest is wrong (so long as there are no offspring), and one has had the opportunity to see a network TV program called *Incest: The Last Taboo*. Pure reason cannot tell us that bestiality is wrong; indeed, the only argument against bestiality these days is that, since we cannot know whether animals enjoy it or not, it is a violation of "animal rights." Reform Judaism has even legitimated homosexuality as "an alternative lifestyle," and some Conservative Jews are trying desperately to figure out why they should not go along. The biblical prohibition, which is unequivocal, is no longer powerful enough to withstand the "why not?" of secular-humanist inquiry.

The consequence of such moral disarray is confusion about the single most important questions that adults face: "How shall we raise our children? What kind of moral example should we set? What moral instruction should we convey?" A society that is impotent before such questions will breed restless, turbulent generations that, confronting their own children, will seek and find authoritative answers somewhere—somewhere, of some kind.

A second flaw in secular humanism is even more fundamental, since it is the source of a spiritual disarray that is at the root of moral chaos. If there is one indisputable fact about the human condition it is that no community can survive if it is persuaded—or even if it suspects—that its members are leading meaningless lives in a meaningless universe. Ever since the beginnings of the Romantic movement, the history of Western thought for over a century and a half now—in its philosophy, its poetry, its arts—has been a reaction to the implication of secular humanism that such is indeed the case. In fairness to secular humanism, it has to be said that it recognizes this challenge and encourages individuals to subdue it through self-mastery and mastery over nature. Human "autonomy" and human "creativity" are the prescription—but this only makes the doctors feel smug while helping the patient not at all. None of the powerful, interesting, and influential thinkers of the 20th century has remained loyal to secular humanism. The three dominant philosophers of our age are Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre—a nihilist, a neopagan, an "anguished" existentialist. The main currents of thought in American universities today—postmodernism, deconstruction, varieties of structuralism—are all contemptuous of the universities' humanist heritage, which is dismissed as the accursed legacy of an "elite" of "dead white males." Secular humanism is brain dead even as its heart continues to pump energy into all of our institutions.

WHAT does this portend for the future of American society? And for the future of Jews in this society?

The situation of American Jews is complicated by the fact that Israel, so crucial to the self-definition of American Jews, is facing exactly the same kind of crisis in secular humanism. Israel, after all, was founded by Jewish socialists for whom Judaism was but a "cultural heritage." Most Israelis still regard themselves as secular—but their secularism turns out to be different from, and more vulnerable than, American Jewish secularism. The very fact that their language is Hebrew and that their children read the Bible in school makes a significant difference. Orthodoxy in Israel is not a "saving remnant"; it is moving toward being the established religion of Israeli society, if not of the Israeli state, which remains technically secular. One out of every twenty eighteen-year-olds in Israel is studying in a yeshiva—i.e., is by American standards "ultra-Orthodox." These give an indication of which way the winds are blowing.

How will American Jews relate to this Israel? The answer, obviously, will depend on what happens to American society and to the place of Jews in it.

As the spirit of secular humanism loses its momentum, it is reasonable to anticipate that religion will play a more central role in American life. In theory, this religion need not be Christian. We see today all sorts of neopagan impulses bubbling up from below, filling an aching spiritual void. On our last Mother's Day, a few dozen people gathered in Central Park and uttered prayers to "Mother Earth" and her associated goddesses. The New York *Times*, in an editorial, thought this a perfectly appropriate way to mark the occasion. In general, what is loosely called "New Age" thinking—our bookshops now have

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special sections to cope with "New Age" literature—represent versions of neopaganism, in which radical-feminist metaphysics plays an especially prominent role. Lesbianism, it turns out, is not so easily quarantined within the boundaries of an "alternative lifestyle."

Still, it is more reasonable to anticipate that the overwhelming majority of Americans, as they turn to religion, will turn to some version (perhaps in modified form) of Christianity. There is little point in speculating about the specific implications of any such development, but one general implication is unavoidable: as American society becomes more Christian, less secular, the "wall of separation between church and state" will become more porous. In all probability, we shall see a turning back of the clock, with the place of religion in the American "public square" more like that which prevailed in the 19th century, as against the 20th.

How will Jews react? In two ways, no doubt. The major Jewish organizations—including the majority of the rabbinate—will dig in their heels in defense of what we call a "liberal" society and "liberal" politics, by which is meant a society inclined to favor secular-humanist ideals and a corresponding set of official policies. At the same time, inevitably, Jews will perforce become "more Jewish," which at the very least will mean a firmer integration into the Jewish community, as well as becoming more observant, though not necessarily going all the way to strict Orthodoxy.

Is THIS picture of 21st-century America good or bad? Specifically, is it good for the Jews or bad for the Jews? The instinctive response of most Jews, committed to their secular liberalism at least as fervently as to their Judaism, will be that it is not merely bad but desperately bleak. One does get the impression that many American Jews would rather see Judaism vanish through intermarriage than hear the President say something nice about Jesus Christ. But this instinctive response is likely to be irrelevant. If America is going to become more Christian, Jews will have to adapt. That adaptation may involve changes in Jewish attitudes toward such matters as school prayer and the like; it would also surely imply a greater sensitivity to Christian feelings than has been evident in certain Jewish organizations in recent years.

In historical perspective, none of this is of major importance. After all, in the decades prior to World War II, American Jews were a lot less militant in their insistence on a secularist society, were indeed quite prudent in their approach to issues that crossed Christian sensibilities. Such prudence can be relearned.

The key question, inevitably, is whether a less secular, more religious society will mean an increase in anti-Semitism. Not official anti-Semitism, of course, which has always been alien to American democracy, but the kind of economic and social discrimination that was common before World War II. It may be noted in passing that such discrimination did not prevent Jews from acquiring wealth, education, and influence. It created hurdles, but not impossible barriers. In any case, while there may be a revival of such discrimination, it is unlikely. In our increasingly multiethnic society, it is hard to see why hostility to Jews should be a ruling passion for large numbers of Americans, especially since Jews are now so firmly established in the mainstream of American life. Insofar as opinion polls can be trusted, Americans display little paranoid distrust of Jews, and in fact are less interested in them than most Jews imagine.

So it is reasonable to believe that Jews will continue to be nervously "at home" in America, though in ways congenial to the 21st century rather than to the 20th. The real danger is not from a revived Christianity, which American Jews (if they are sensible) can cope with, but from an upsurge of anti-biblical barbarism that will challenge Christianity, Judaism, and Western civilization altogether. The passing of secular humanism is already pointing to such a "shaking of the foundations." American Jews, alert to Christian anti-Semitism, are in danger of forgetting that it was the pagans—the Babylonians and the Romans—who destroyed the temples and twice imposed exile on the Jewish people.

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Victory Through Air Power

Edward N. Luttwak

WHEN President Bush reversed his immediate reaction to Iraq's August 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait (he had originally ruled out any use of force), the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, was only the most senior of the military officers and defense officials who opposed sending U.S. troops into Saudi Arabia. In part their objection was "political" (or at least it was dismissed as such by Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney): they argued that the Saudi ruling family would not fatally compromise its Islamic legitimacy by openly helping infidels against fellow Muslims—and that even if the Saudis were reckless enough to do so, the United States should not become the instrument of their demise. But there was also a purely military objection: bitter memories of Lebanon and Vietnam induced a powerful reluctance to expose badly outnumbered U.S. troops to uncertain hazards for unspecified purposes. For there was no intention as yet to mount a full-scale expedition, and still less to dislodge the Iraqis from Kuwait.

The alternative offered by Powell and those who sided with him was to rely on air power alone, whether to protect Saudi Arabia by threatening punitive bombardment, or eventually to force Iraq's withdrawal by the same means, very likely in the context of negotiations.

Even when the President overruled Powell and ordered the U.S. Central Command to start Desert Shield on August 6, 1990 with the airlift of the 82nd Airborne division and other light forces, and the transfer of Marine Corps prepositioned ships from Diego Garcia to Saudi ports, this was still then regarded as a largely symbolic gesture. Insofar as any sort of combat was considered at all, only air bombardment was envisaged by the original "Instant Thunder" plan, whose very name represented the rejection of Vietnam-era gradualism. For instead of attacking peripheral targets mostly of modest importance, as in President Johnson's "Rolling Thunder" bombing campaign of 1965-68, Instant Thunder called for the concentrated precision bombing of the most important sites in Baghdad from the very start of a war.

In broad outline, the plan amounted to a self-sufficient air offensive in three phases. The first and shortest was intended to win air superiority over the whole of Iraq and Kuwait by the systematic attack on the main Iraqi radar and air-defense command centers, the runways of the civil and military airfields where Iraqi military aircraft were already dispersed, and some of the major anti-aircraft missile batteries.

In addition to these typical "defense-suppression" targets, the first phase also included the most urgent strategic targets, notably the major military and regime headquarters with their communications, mostly in Baghdad. Targeted too were the fixed launchers and known storage sites of Iraqi Scud missiles and biological and chemical weapons, in order to diminish the then much-feared threat of chemical attacks against Israeli and Saudi cities as well as U.S. ports of entry.

The second phase was to focus the air attack against Iraq's entire military infrastructure, starting with ammunition dumps, oil refineries, petroleum-product tank farms, and the major depots for weapons of all kinds. Success in attacking those "military-support" targets would henceforth limit Iraqi military units to the fuel and ammunition they already held in their forward areas, enough for only 72 hours or so of intense operations. The larger effort of this second phase, however, was to be the bombing of Iraq's entire military-industrial base—the weapon-assembly lines, the factories and repair workshops, and the laboratories and plants where chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons were being developed or actually produced. In addition, Iraq's civil infrastructure was also to be incapacitated by precision attacks on electrical-power plants, radio and TV stations, telephone exchanges, water-treatment plants, etc.

The third phase, starting in the second week of the air offensive, was to focus on Iraq's main strength, its ground forces, with air strikes against the railway and road bridges between Baghdad and Kuwait, the area-bombing of Republican Guard and other selected Iraqi ground forces, and precision attacks against naval vessels and Iraqi

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK holds the Arleigh Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C. His latest book (written with Stuart L. Koehl), *The Dictionary of Modern War*, has just been published by HarperCollins.

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aircraft in and out of their shelters, among other such "high-value" targets.

In the event, by the time the war began there were more U.S. and allied aircraft on hand than had originally been anticipated, so that the three phases were greatly compressed. Still, Instant Thunder was to remain the essence of the war plan that was actually carried out.

THE logic of relying on long-range air power against an enemy whose only strength lay in short-range ground fire now seems self-evident. Yet between August 1990 and the outbreak of war on January 16, 1991, as the Desert Shield deployment evolved by stages into a full-scale expeditionary effort of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force units, there was intense debate in and out of the Pentagon about the value of bombardment alone against Iraq. Many insisted that it could not achieve very much.

The reason was that 70 years of overpromising by air-power advocates from the 1920's onward had left a deep residue of distrust in Washington's military culture. Because bombardment was thought to have failed in Indochina, because it was not considered to have been "decisive" in the Korean War, or in World War II before it, many believed that it could not defeat Iraq, either. Indeed, those who called for a reliance on bombardment rather than a prompt ground war were dismissed as (in the words of a New York *Times* editorial) "air-power fanatics."

Moreover, in the debate that began in August 1990 there was a widespread tendency to apply negative judgments of the value of bombardment drawn from the unfavorable tropical setting and (mostly) guerrilla combat of Indochina to the desert setting of an entirely conventional war with Iraq. Yet in the Middle East, bombardment had *always* been much more successful than in the tropics with their all-concealing vegetation. As early as 1916, the German squadron based in Palestine that supported the Ottoman army kept the Arab rebels on the run and the British army of Egypt on the defensive, and then in turn Allenby's airmen were decisive in 1918 in the conquest of Palestine. Later, air power was clearly decisive in both the North African campaigns from 1941 to 1943, and in the Arab-Israeli wars from 1956 onward.

There was a parallel failure to recognize the new quality of bombardment brought about by "stealth," by the systematic attack on air defenses, and by precision bombing. But this failure was far more understandable because it was by no means self-evident that each would actually work in combat as advertised, and that their combination would turn out to be so exceedingly powerful. Just how powerful can be grasped by a comparison between World War II and Desert Storm.

After years of bombing, much of Berlin was in ruins by January 1945, but Goebbels could still broadcast nationwide, Hitler could still freely send out orders and receive reports from all fronts by radio and teleprinter, the German army could still supply and move its forces by rail, the Luftwaffe could still challenge Allied bombers, and Berlin's population at large still had electricity, telephone service, water, and adequate supplies of all basic necessities.

By contrast, after less than 48 hours of bombing in January 1991, Baghdad was still largely intact—as it remained throughout the war (CNN showed a few of the 50-odd destroyed buildings, again and again)—but Saddam Hussein could no longer broadcast on television or nationwide AM radio, all major military headquarters were wrecked, military telecommunications no longer worked, Iraqi air defenses were largely incapacitated, and in Baghdad the population at large was deprived of electricity, telephone service, and piped water.

During the next few weeks, the Iraqi army was cut off from food, fuel, and ammunition resupply by the destruction of rail and road bridges; more and more Iraqi tanks, artillery pieces, aircraft in and out of shelters, and naval vessels were destroyed by direct hits from guided weapons; and any forces that moved out of their dug-in positions were quickly detected and attacked, so that the Iraqi army in and out of Kuwait was almost entirely immobilized.

Again, the six years of bombing in World War II killed many Germans and ruined many German towns and cities without defeating Nazi Germany. In Desert Storm the opposite happened: a few weeks of bombing hardly damaged Iraqi towns and cities but totally defeated Iraq's military power. The result was that the final ground offensive of Desert Storm was not offensive at all but rather an almost unopposed advance. Heavily protected American M-1 tanks got through unscathed, but so did lightly armored troop carriers, and so did the jeeps of the French Foreign Legion, and the rented cars of adventurous journalists. Air power had finally done it.

But not through the sheer tonnage of bombs dropped. Contrary to the impression left by the briefings with their daily "total sortie" counts of 2,000 and more—counts which conflated transport, refueling, defensive-patrol, reconnaissance, and escort flights with the minority of actual strike sorties—the weight of bombs dropped in Desert Storm, roughly 85,000 tons, was by no means huge: in March 1945 alone the American and British air forces dropped 134,000 tons on Germany. In any case, it was the roughly 8,000 tons of precision weapons that made all the difference, rather than the 177,999 plain bombs which accounted for 90 percent of the tonnage dropped on Iraq and Kuwait and which were no more effective than the bombs of previous wars. In short, what was decisive about Desert Storm was not the quantity but the quality of its bombing campaign.

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THERE is obviously much to be learned from Desert Storm, but any attempt to define the "lessons" of the air war is just as obviously premature. Even the plain facts remain to be sorted out, with much study still needed just to reconstruct what happened, let alone extract lessons properly isolated from the many peculiarities of the war. But some highly preliminary observations may be in order.

First, the international context was crucial not merely in a broad diplomatic sense but also specifically in regard to the air war. Because Iraq was diplomatically isolated before it was attacked, the bombardment went unchallenged by any third-party intervention. In the past, for example, we might have witnessed a Soviet airlift of the latest and best air-defense equipment, possibly complete with crews. Regardless of the technical effectiveness of such help, the airlift itself could have inhibited the air attack.

Second, the *situational* limits of air power must not be overlooked in celebrating its signal achievement in Desert Storm. The value of bombardment depends on the strategic value of the targets it can actually destroy, and the less a war is conventional, the fewer are the stable and easily identifiable targets of high value. Against elusive guerrillas who present no stable targets at all of any value (as in Vietnam), bombardment remains of little use even if it is perfectly accurate.

In lesser degree, the geographic setting is also significant. In spite of the extreme accuracy of the latest navigation techniques, even in Desert Storm bad weather with dense clouds and low ceilings was sufficient to restrict air operations for days at a time. Against moving targets that had to be spotted with the naked eye to be attacked at all, and most famously the mobile Scud launchers, the effect of bad weather was very direct. In the days when the felt urgency of striking at Scud launchers was at its height, on D+13 (January 30) only three sorties were flown to look for Scuds, on D+14 only one sortie could be flown, rising to a mere nine on D+15, with none at all on D+16.

As it happens, the reduced pace of air operations caused by bad weather merely delayed but did not change the outcome, because the Iraqis were unable or unwilling to take advantage of the respite to carry out ground attacks of their own. Against a more aggressive enemy, however, the consequences might have been severe. Clearly, this factor must be taken into account in applying any lessons of the war to other possible wars that might unfold in less favorable geographic settings, against more active opponents.

Third, strategic thought has become more important than ever in planning an air campaign. In the past, when bombing was a hit-or-miss affair, it did not help much to select exactly the right targets, and assign exactly the right priorities to them—the chances were that they would not be hit anyway, and certainly not in any specific sequence. From now on, by contrast, air strategy will be made up of exactly such choices.

For even in a most uneven encounter, the planner of a bombing campaign must contend with scarcity—he cannot attack all possible targets immediately and concurrently. Some targets, notably those required for defense suppression, automatically warrant the highest priority. Others, notably urban areas as such, may easily be dismissed as useless or even counterproductive. It is among the myriad possible targets in between that the planner must select what to bomb and in what sequence, according to his best estimate of the vulnerabilities of the enemy, and especially of the enemy's own strategy (the highest form of warfare is to attack the enemy's intended course of action rather than his forces, or his country).

Science is everywhere applied in air warfare but no scientific theory can guide the choice of targets, on which the strategic success of bombardment entirely depends. There is no other recourse but to study as broadly as possible the country, its political leadership, all that is known of its current goals in the conflict at hand, the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of its armed forces and their presumed military modus operandi, down to the tactical level.

The aim is to construct an "anatomical chart" that identifies the key links and organs of the enemy-in-action. The goal is to defeat him by attacking his brain and nervous system (i.e., his command and communications) rather than his digestive system (his supply); or the latter rather than his muscles (his field forces); or the latter rather than his body as a whole (by the area bombing of cities, industrial zones, etc.). Just such an exercise was conducted by the planners of Instant Thunder, who selected their priority lists from a mass of potentially significant targets to formulate the bombing plan.

Technology, if not science, does help in the more detailed analysis of vulnerability. Now that bombs can be guided down the air shafts of aircraft bunkers and onto a specific spot on a large bridge, the expertise of structural engineers and a host of other such specialists has become correspondingly important in planning an air campaign. A pontoon bridge that loses one of its middle segments is soon repaired, but if cut from its moorings to float downstream it will have to be replaced. Likewise, different types of buildings in Baghdad called for radically different forms of attack (and critics of modern architecture will be reinforced in their beliefs by the prompt collapse of the most modern high-rise buildings). Actually this sort of engineering-in-reverse was highly developed by the end of World War II but it became a lost art with the advent of nuclear weapons, when strategic bombing was equated with wholesale destruction. Now it is back again.

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NATURALLY the tactical and operational discoveries of the war were more dramatic, though also not easy to interpret safely. Desert Storm began with the world's second coordinated "defense-suppression" campaign, the first being the much smaller and much faster Israeli annihilation of the Syrian air defenses in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley during the 1982 war. That, and the use of "stealth" aircraft to bomb the best-defended targets in and around Baghdad, had two results, one very obvious, and the other rather subtle. The first was that losses were exceedingly small, with a grand total of only 39 aircraft lost in combat by the entire coalition. That collective rate was minuscule (0.05 percent of the force), but it was still substantially higher than the yet smaller loss rate of the U.S. Air Force (0.034 percent), even though it was the latter that attacked the deepest and presumptively best-defended targets.

The more subtle yet actually more valuable benefit of stealth was that it allowed the reconquest of the middle altitudes, from where aircraft can bomb most effectively. Instead of being forced by air defenses to fly too high—or too low and too fast—to see anything, let alone aim their weapons carefully, the American F-117s could fly at moderate speeds and at the heights best suited to identify their targets and then launch weapons against them with all due deliberation, still being overhead to observe and film the immediate results, not only for television viewers around the world but also for the planners of their next attack.

By contrast, the ultra-low altitude, very high-speed bombing tactics cultivated over the years by the British Royal Air Force to circumvent Soviet missile air defenses were wrong for Iraq, whose missile defenses were disrupted from the start, but where an abundance of anti-aircraft guns made the lowest altitudes quite dangerous. The British in fact lost one-sixth of their Tornado force in six days. Moreover, in all circumstances their tactics turned aircraft into blind and unresponsive missiles, which could not usefully employ the most reliable and most economical of current precision weapons, the laser-guided bombs that glide down to their targets. Similarly, the high-altitude flight of U.S. B52s was also incompatible with the effective use of the most widely available precision weapons, allowing in practice only "area" bombing of doubtful value.

For of course the greatest discovery of the Iraq air war was that virtually all bombing should nowadays be precision bombing. It was even found that ground forces themselves are best attacked by individual precision strikes against their major weapons, tanks, artillery pieces, and so on.

Another key discovery was that stealth aircraft, though expensive, can be very economical. The paradox has a simple explanation: to avoid losses, non-stealth bombing aircraft must now be escorted by fighters flying top cover against enemy fighters; by more fighters armed with radiation-homing missiles to attack enemy radars; by electronic jamming aircraft; and by tankers for the lot of them. During the first two weeks of the Iraq air war, such supporting aircraft routinely outnumbered the aircraft that actually bombed. But stealth aircraft needed no protective escorts, so that their unit cost was also their total cost.

So, too, the cheapest of all precision air weapons, the laser-guided bombs that cost $9,000 to $15,000, also turned out to be the best. Next in value were the air-launched missiles that cost ten times as much or more. Finally, the cruise missiles, much celebrated in the press and costing more than a million dollars each, were the least useful. A very great help during the first hours, when they could be launched without risking a pilot against the then-unknown dangers of Iraq, they simply could not compete against cheaper weapons when these too could be used with impunity.

BECAUSE each reality of war exists concurrently at so many different levels, only tentative conclusions are possible about what happened and why, let alone what might happen in the future if the same methods and weapons were to be employed again, in another part of the world, against a different enemy. But at least it may be said that after 70 years the old promises of "Victory Through Air Power" were finally redeemed in 1991 in the skies of Iraq.

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The Two Cultures (Continued)

Michael Lind

ONE of the most remarkable non-events in recent intellectual history took place in the 1980's, when a particular debate failed to occur. That failure tells us much about the life of the mind today.

To set the stage we need to glance back 200 years. In the 1750's, the Swedish biologist Carl Linnaeus, in the interest of clarifying God's cosmic design, devised the system of nomenclature under which the human race was assigned to a genus of its own, *Homo sapiens*. For two centuries this stood unchallenged, notwithstanding the revolution in the scientific understanding of man produced by Charles Darwin. Then, in 1984, two scientists then at Yale's Peabody Museum, John Alquist and Charles Sibley, basing themselves on highly sophisticated biochemical techniques, proposed that man should no longer be assigned to a genus of his own but should rather be grouped together with the gorilla and the two species of chimpanzees. The genus *Homo*, in other words, would now include four species: *Homo gorilla*; *Homo paniscus* and *Homo troglodytes* (chimpanzees); and *Homo sapiens*.

To reclassify the human race and its nearest relatives according to a scheme in which the difference between gibbons and great apes becomes more significant than the difference between man and chimpanzee is to underscore in vividly explicit terms what has become the central premise of contemporary biological science—namely, that the human race is different in degree, but not in kind, from other animal species. Obviously, then, the symbolic significance of the Alquist-Sibley proposal is enormous. And yet it passed virtually unnoticed by the larger intellectual community. The proposal provoked no impassioned debates in leading periodicals, no artistic expressions, no conferences of leading thinkers, no public reconsideration of concepts of human (or, for that matter, animal) rights. The intellectual community did not dispute this revolutionary redefinition of mankind. The intellectuals did not even notice.

The ease with which the Alquist-Sibley proposal escaped attention, slipping into obscurity after appearing in the science pages of a few newspapers, contrasts with the furor occasioned by the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and its sequel, *The Descent of Man*, in 1871. Indeed, the episode illustrates what has in our century become a persistent pattern. The disciplines known, rather arrogantly, as "the humanities," tend to engage in their internal debates in complete isolation from the theories of contemporary science about the nature of man. Edward O. Wilson, the Harvard biologist whose *Sociobiology* (1975) introduced the new synthesis of human biology and social science to a wider audience, has remarked upon this phenomenon in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *On Human Nature* (1978):

> [A]stonishingly, the high culture of Western civilization exists largely apart from the natural sciences. In the United States intellectuals are virtually defined as those who work in the prevailing mode of the social sciences and humanities. . . . In the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, COMMENTARY, the *New Republic*, *Daedalus*, *National Review*, *Saturday Review*, and other literary journals articles dominate that read as if most of basic science had halted during the 19th century. Their content consists largely of historical anecdotes, diachronic collating of outdated, verbalized theories of human behavior, and judgments of current events according to personal ideology—all enlivened by the pleasant but frustrating techniques of effervescence.

As for scientific popularizers (Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, and Lewis Thomas come to mind), Wilson dismisses them as "tame scientists, the token emissaries of what must be viewed by their hosts as a barbaric culture still ungraced by a written language." Wilson concludes his complaint by noting that "very few of the great writers, the ones who can trouble and move the deeper reaches of the mind, ever address real science on its own terms. Do they know the nature of the challenge?"

THE isolation of the humanities from the natural sciences has, if anything, grown worse in the 30 years since C.P. Snow stirred up a storm with his polemic, *The Two Cultures*. This is true virtually across the whole spectrum of humanist studies.

MICHAEL LIND is executive editor of the *National Interest*.

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Take contemporary philosophy, for example. Both Anglo-American language philosophy and continental philosophies such as phenomenology and existentialism have defined the scope of their investigations to exclude the kinds of issues about which science might have something to say. That leaves political and ethical philosophy, from which (one might think) issues like sex differences, the nature of the family, the nature and importance of instinct cannot be so easily excluded. Yet with occasional exceptions like Tom Regan and James Rachels, who have based their arguments for animal rights in part on evolutionary biology, most moral and political theorists today tend to ignore the evidence of scientific anthropology, psychology, and evolutionary biology in their work. Instead, they offer *a priori* definitions of justice, from which they derive entire theories of social organization.

Of course, the disparate philosophies of John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and other contemporaries may contain *implicit* theories of human nature. Still, Rawls's "veil of ignorance"—his metaphor for the construction of an entire social order which will ignore differences in age, sex, or competence among individuals—suggests an apposite image. A veil of ignorance screens academic political and moral theory from the accumulating evidence of the scientific study of man. An old story has scholastic philosophers sitting indoors debating the number of teeth in a horse's head, while a Renaissance scientist finds a horse skull and counts. Late 20th-century moral philosophy is a new scholasticism.

If academic philosophy has been indifferent to biological science, social science for generations has been actively hostile. This was not always the case. In the late 19th century, practically every school of social science sought to do for society what Darwin had done for the organic world. Marx asserted to Engels that Darwin had provided "the basis in natural history that we need" for socialism. Other socialists, and anarchists as well, sought to be described as Social Darwinists no less than did the classical liberals and racists to whom the term is now applied. Herbert Spencer (from whom Darwin borrowed "survival of the fittest" as a shorthand for natural selection) saw no contradiction between his liberalism and the belief (shared with Darwin) that "savage" races were biologically incapable of industrial capitalism.

This example shows, incidentally, how easily Darwinian ideas were incorporated into racist and reductionist views of human nature, particularly before the genetic basis of evolution was fully understood. In Germany, Ernst Haeckel propagated a pseudo-science of "monism" which sought to give scientific respectability to blood-and-soil bigotry. Recent students of Nietzsche, criticizing Walter Kaufmann's postwar "de-Nazification" of the philosopher, have suggested that when Nietzsche spoke of breeding a master race he was not being metaphorical. In the United States, advocates of eugenic sterilization, restrictive immigration, and Jim Crow invoked Darwin to support the policies they favored.

Against such hereditarian excesses, the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas led a reaction at the turn of the century. Boas sought environmental and cultural rather than biological interpretations for the differences among human groups. One of his students, Alfred Kroeber, with his 1917 essay "The Superorganic," made culture not only the predominant but the exclusive basis of explanation in social science. Kroeber asserted that "the only antecedents of historical phenomena are historical phenomena," or as another student of Boas at Columbia, Robert Lowie, put it, "*Omnis cultura ex cultura.*"

A problem with the Boas school was that it risked substituting one determinism for another: a theory of "culture" which explained everything ended up explaining nothing. In addition, the gap between the supposedly autonomous world of culture and the determined world of human biology remained as great as that between mind and body in Cartesian dualism. In spite of these shortcomings, however, students of Boas such as Kroeber, Lowie, Margaret Mead, and Ruth Benedict defeated their rivals in the American academy even before the horrors of Nazism (inspired, in part, by Haeckel's monism) seemed to discredit hereditarian theories altogether.

But the picture is more complicated than that. As Carl N. Degler shows in his recent book, *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought,** considerable dissent from the new orthodoxy of social determinism had built up among social scientists, psychologists, and biologists long before Edward O. Wilson published *Sociobiology* in 1975. Since the failed trial marriage of social and natural science, evolutionary biology had been transformed by the new science of genetics in the work of R.A. Fisher and others.

The key element of the new sociobiology is the notion of "inclusive fitness" or "kin selection." Social behavior which does not help an individual to reproduce may nevertheless increase his "genetic fitness" by increasing the reproductive chances of siblings and other collateral kin. The theory of inclusive fitness helps explain a variety of altruistic and cooperative behaviors, but it continues to be disparaged by many, including biologists like Wilson's Harvard colleague Stephen Jay Gould who defends the autonomy of culture. Although the revisionist minority is determined that Darwinian approaches will not be expelled from social science a second time, it may thus be premature, or even wrongheaded, to hope that the

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idea of kin selection can provide a new bridge between natural and social science.

WHAT about the literary community? The importance of literature in a liberal education has grown in recent generations, as other disciplines once central to the humanities have become marginal (theology, classics), utilitarian (law), or reduced to mathematics (economics, philosophy). A liberal education, today perhaps more than ever, is a literary education, which may help explain the heat generated by conflicts like the battle over the "canon."

To this whole world, however, science in general and evolutionary biology in particular remain strangers. Darwinism *did* have a profound impact on many literary people of the 19th century, particularly in Darwin's own Britain. Tennyson in much of his later work struggled to reconcile biological evolution—"Nature red in tooth and claw"—with religion and morality in some kind of comprehensive vision. "Next to the Bible, *In Memoriam* is my comfort," the widowed Queen Victoria told the Poet Laureate; in that great poem, Tennyson, well-schooled in the science of his time, sought comfort in the rather radical idea that his beloved friend Arthur Hallam was the precursor of a higher, future human species, "a closer link/ Betwixt us and the crowning race."

The widespread—and mistaken—belief that Darwin had proved man was "nothing but" an ape inspired the creation of two of the lasting characters of popular fiction, Dr. Jekyll (Mr. Hyde) and Tarzan (Lord Greystoke). Indeed, if Sherlock Holmes represents high-Victorian rationality, Tarzan, the English lord who prefers his adopted ape family to the peerage, symbolizes the post-Darwinian primitivism and vitalism which, in high culture, went on to influence a novelist like D.H. Lawrence, a painter like the Picasso of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, and a playwright like the Eugene O'Neill of *The Hairy Ape*. There was also George Bernard Shaw, who set forth his vitalist alternative to "Darwinism" in his play, *Man and Superman* (1903). (Shaw lost his battle with Darwin, but may have killed eugenics with his perhaps legendary refutation of Isadora Duncan's proposal that she should bear his child: "But Madame, what if the child turned out to have *my* beauty and *your* brains?")

The Huxley brothers and J.B.S. Haldane symbolize the cross-fertilization of scientific and literary minds in interwar Britain. Aldous Huxley, the novelist, and his brother Julian, the biologist, were the grandsons of T.H. Huxley, Darwin's greatest contemporary exponent and defender. The younger Huxleys were on the editorial board of the literary magazine, the *Realist*, along with H.G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Rebecca West, and Harold Laski. Julian became one of the founders of modern "synthetic" evolutionary theory, as well as the author of numerous popular-science books. Aldous Huxley wrote several satirical novels on Darwinian themes, of which *Brave New World* (1932) is the best known. *Brave New World* is a parody of *Daedalus* (1924), a novel by J.B.S. Haldane exploring the possibility of test-tube babies. Haldane also reportedly provided Huxley with the model for the cuckolded biologist Shearwater in his novel *Antic Hay* (1923). One of the great theorists of population genetics, Haldane was an immensely literate man, who, when dying, wrote a bleakly comic poem to his cancer. To complete the circle, the scandal occasioned by Haldane's divorce when he was a Cambridge don provided the inspiration for one of the academic novels of C.P. Snow.

TO TURN, however, from the interdisciplinary ferment of early 20th-century Britain to the literary scene of postwar Britain and of the United States is to enter a period when, for the most part, literary people act and create as though Darwin never existed. "Descended from the apes!" a bishop's wife is supposed to have remarked when *The Descent of Man* was published. "My dear, let us hope that it is not true, but if it is, let us pray that it will not become generally known." In the American literary community, especially, her wish seems to have been fulfilled.

In part this may result from the anti-scientific bias of the early 20th-century modernists. Poets like T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and W.B. Yeats, along with the Southern Agrarian/Fugitives in the United States, abominated modern science (along with modern industry, urbanism, and democracy). Eliot sought solace in 17th-century Anglicanism, while Yeats found his in spiritualism. Successor generations of literary modernists, though cold to their creeds, have accepted the assumption that the literary mind has little if anything to learn from the scientific.

Even more important may have been the redefinition of the poet's role in the 20th century. The revolution in biological science has occurred at a time when those poetic genres which used to take all knowledge as their subject, such as epic and didactic verse, have fallen into disfavor. Charles Darwin's own grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, expounded an early version of evolutionary theory in a verse epic, *The Temple of Nature* (1803): "Then, whilst the sea, at their coeval birth/ Surge over surge, involved the shoreless earth;/ Nurs'd by warm sun-beams in primeval caves,/ Organic Life began beneath the waves." The elder Darwin's German contemporary Goethe, one of the leading lights of continental *Naturphilosophie*, similarly committed biological speculations to verse. Yet it is safe to predict that something like Erasmus Darwin's *The Temple of Nature* or Pope's *Essay on Man* would not be written today, and could not find a publisher if it were.

The combination of information and drama

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which readers once sought in epic can now be found chiefly in popular novels. James Michener's *Colorado*, which contains a lengthy digression into the Jurassic period, is one example. As for "serious" fiction, unless the characters in a John Updike novel discuss sociobiology, today's literati are unlikely to encounter the subject at all.

We find a similar situation when we turn from the writing of literature to its analysis. If C.P. Snow were around today he would discover that of the two cultures he surveyed, one, the humanities, has already evolved into two genera. One genus, now ascendant in the literary academy, is that of the radicals, and it contains more subcategories than there are kinds of Galapagos finches. Two species may nevertheless be discerned. The first consists of those whose theories deal with the interpretation of language—structuralism, deconstruction, and the like. The other includes revolutionaries *manqués* who are interested in literature chiefly for what it reveals about capitalist or "patriarchalist" power relations. A certain amount of interbreeding occurs—thus feminists can borrow deconstructionist techniques to expose just how male chauvinism is encrypted into, say, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the revolutionists tend to look with some disdain on the "frivolity" of the language theorists.

The findings of contemporary biological science present the greatest threat to Marxists, feminists, and multiculturalists. Their program of exposing the capitalist, patriarchalist, and imperialist propaganda allegedly encoded into the canonical works of Western literature is part of a larger project—the creation of a society purged of these things. This assumes the acceptance, as dogma, of the most extreme versions of social or cultural determinism: the belief that social structures have purely social origins. Some feminists, to be sure, acknowledge and even celebrate the biological differences between the sexes which are reflected by social conventions, but they are a minority. Mainstream feminism remains committed to the cultural-determinist dogma of the social "construction" of gender.

That dogma is undermined by contemporary scientific evidence that the sexual division of labor is not a purely conventional product of "Western phallocentrism" but something which the common human "biogrammar" produces in some form in every society and every culture. Rather than address the findings of science, some cultural determinists attack the motives of scientists. Peter Berger has described how a religious tradition may try to explain away a rival by techniques of "nihilation," and the nihilatory techniques of radical humanism are well-developed. The feminist theorist Marian Lowe has written, for example, "The current theories about the biological basis of social structures are of use to those who want to preserve and strengthen the dominant political and economic interests."

This avenue of retreat forces radicals to sacrifice an older radical claim—namely, that of representing a "true" science of humanity. Marxism, the template for all other radical ideologies, had at its core a vague but genuine belief in a "species-being" of mankind which would find its truest manifestation under socialism. Marx did not doubt that the application of natural science to the study of man would support "scientific socialism." He wrote in 1844: "The sciences of nature will integrate the sciences of man, just as the sciences of man will integrate the sciences of nature, and there will be only one science."

An even greater influence on 20th-century literary intellectuals than Marx may have been Freud, whose theory cannot be easily separated from a bogus turn-of-the-century biologism. Freud's ignorance of contemporary scientific developments in genetics, for example, meant that he went to his grave believing in the discredited Lamarckian theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Belief in this fallacy permitted him to assert (in *Totem and Taboo*) that the incest taboo originates from a kind of racial memory of an actual, primordial patricide. Freud also quaintly attributed the prevalence of anxiety among modern human beings to "the influence of the privations that the encroaching Ice Age imposed upon [mankind]." From the perspective of contemporary science, this is all utter nonsense.

One can try, of course, to have Freud and Marx without the discredited biological theories on which they believed their work was founded. This strategy, however, would seem to undermine the intellectual authority of Marxist and Freudian humanists. It may be, indeed, that the only radical literary ideology which can survive the interrogation of contemporary biological science is one now in eclipse, the existentialism of Sartre. For existentialism rejects the "facticity" of nature as well as of society; true freedom consists in arbitrariness, in the *acte gratuite*. To this irrationalist and "science-proof" conception of freedom the radical strain in the humanities may ultimately be forced to retreat.

Compared to the ascendant radicals in the literary academy, the second genus, that of traditional humanists, forms a beleaguered and dwindling Old Guard. Nevertheless, at first sight these scholars may seem less likely to be undermined by the discoveries of biological science. The traditionalist approach assumes the existence of what neoclassical criticism called "general nature," a common humanity manifested in varying ways through historic cultures. Literary critics in the tradition of Matthew Arnold view great literature as a guide to this transcultural human nature, not as a linguistic curiosity or as a form of ruling-class propaganda. Literature, the

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traditionalist might say, shows humanity from within, as science shows humanity from without. Between these two modes of studying the common human subject, there need be no conflict.

An attempt to end the war between the two cultures by dividing the subject of mankind into realms ruled respectively by scientists and old-fashioned humanists may not be sustainable, however, because of the claims of the humanists themselves. Literature, in their view, makes assertions about the facts of human life as well as about the forms of art. A genuine traditionalist would reject Northrop Frye's statement that to call Shakespeare "one of the great poets of the world" is "not a statement of fact" but "a value-judgment" to which "not a shred of systematic criticism can ever be attached." For traditional humanism, literature is a representative art. However stylized its conventions may be, literature represents the human animal, an animal available for comparison with its picture.

From this it follows for the traditional humanist that the works of individual artists, perhaps the conventions of entire cultures, can be not only described in formal terms but evaluated in terms of their fidelity to life. It is because one has an idea of human nature which is based on something other than Shakespeare that one can decide whether Shakespeare reveals profound truths about that human nature or not. But this opens the possibility of saying that Shakespeare was wrong. Clinical psychology, for example, may show that Shakespearean mad scenes are intuitively perceptive—or hopelessly false; Shakespeare's *Macbeth* may be a profoundly realistic portrait of a murder, or a portrait that shows a lack of understanding of real murderers and real usurpers. This is not a possibility that most traditional humanists care to entertain.

WHAT would the intellectual scene look like if a canal were built across the isthmus that now separates the currents of ideas in biological science from those in the humanities and social sciences?

Admittedly the building of such a canal may be a bad idea. The history of efforts to create a synthesis of the sciences and the humanities—whether benign (the positivism of St. Simon, the theology of Teilhard de Chardin) or malign (National Socialism, Soviet Marxist-Leninism)—is chastening. The replacement of social determinism by biological determinism would hardly be an improvement.

Yet a minimal alternative may remain. Without purporting to replace the humanities and social sciences, biological science might map the boundaries of their domains. For centuries, natural science has imposed limits on metaphysical reflection: theologians no longer speculate about the ether and the music of the spheres. In a similar way, biological science might constrain utopian social theory and political fantasy. "We already know," Edward O. Wilson writes, "to take two extreme and opposite examples, that the worlds of William Graham Sumner, the absolute Social Darwinist, and Mikhail Bakunin, the anarchist, are biologically impossible." To which one might now add the worlds of Marx and Lenin, and perhaps of certain schools of women's studies. That, at least, and even by itself alone, would be a major intellectual gain.

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Paula, Dinky & the Shark

A Story

Joseph Epstein

The morning Paula Melnick read in the *Trib* about the murder of Jimmy Kogan—his body, riddled with bullets, found in the trunk of his own white Jaguar, the car left in the parking lot of the Edgebrook Lutheran Church—she was neither shocked nor even surprised yet, somehow, sadder than she expected to be. The wonder was that he had made it to the age of fifty-seven. To Paula, who had known him since childhood, he was always Jimmy Kogan. To the newspapers he was James ("The Shark") Kogan, generally described as the Mob's man in charge of gambling and prostitution in Chicago. It occurred to Paula that morning that Jimmy Kogan was one of the few Jewish boys she had grown up with who had gone into his father's business—and had not become, like most, a physician, lawyer, dentist, CPA (like David, her own husband), or professor—and had actually surpassed his father in the same line of work.

Paula (then Cohen) grew up three doors down from the Kogans on Lunt between Francisco and Sacramento. Lou Kogan was notable among fathers on the block for never seeming to go to work. He played golf from April through October at Twin Orchards Country Club; from October through April, with occasional breaks for trips to Miami, Phoenix, or Palm Springs, he played high-stakes gin rummy with cronies at the Covenant Club in the Loop. A small man (5'2" or 5'3"), bald, with a carefully tended mustache, Lou Kogan was four or five inches shorter than his wife Mary, whose maiden name was Doyle and who was said to have been a dancer—a chorus girl, actually, one of the old Chez Paree Adorables—when young in the 30's. She was still beautiful in her late forties, Mary Kogan, good-natured, kindly, yet somehow, Paula sensed, not very significant.

Lou Kogan smiled a lot, was always joking, but owing perhaps to his reputation there was something slightly menacing about him, or so it seemed to Paula. Whenever she saw Lou or Mary Kogan together, little Lou and his statuesque wife Mary, she couldn't resist thinking about a dopey coin she had once seen, which on one side showed a small man in tails standing next to a much taller woman in an evening gown, and on its other side showed the same couple from the back but with the man's hand under the woman's skirt, resting on her exposed and well-shaped behind.

As for Lou Kogan's reputation, it began with his older brother Harry, who through the Prohibition years was a Bugsy Siegel lieutenant, a head-knocker, a real tough guy. "One of those guys who bend your knees—the wrong way," Paula's father had once put it. Lou was Harry's little brother, roughly ten years younger and someone Harry was supposed to have always looked after and to have doted upon. One of the stories about Lou Kogan was that, because of deals his brother had worked out during the war, he, Lou, was still collecting a dollar a month on every cigarette vending machine in the city of Chicago. "It adds up to a nice piece of change," Paula's father said, "a damn nice piece of change."

Maury Cohen, Paula's father, considered himself something of an expert on the subject of the Mob in Chicago. And with some reason. He owned two saloons, one in the Loop, the other on West Madison Street, and he had been dealing with the "boys" for a great many years. From the Teamsters who delivered his beer to the dapper Sal Musalloni who sold him paper napkins, detergents, and his towel service, he had done business with the boys from way back when. He figured it must have cost him in the neighborhood of two to three hundred a month to use their various services, but then their services weren't entirely restricted to beer and napkins, either. When a greedy cop sent in a mature-looking girl for a drink and then nabbed Maury Cohen's bartender for serving a minor, or a health inspector put the screws on for more than the standard *shmeer*, a call to the boys would quickly put things to rights. What over the years Maury Cohen had contributed to the boys added up to another damn nice piece of change. But if you wanted to do business in Chicago, especially in the liquor business, you really didn't have much choice.

Paula loved her father, who, as far back as she could remember, always treated her as if she had good sense and was able to grasp anything he told

Joseph Epstein, whose story, "Another Rare Visit With Noah Danzig," appeared in our October 1990 issue, is the editor of the *American Scholar*. A new book of his essays, *A Line Out for a Walk*, has recently been published by Norton.

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her. Once, when she was fourteen, he told her that he regretted she wasn't a boy, because if she were she would have been a terrific businessman, a much better one, he thought, than her brother Jerome was ever likely to be. Paula and her father even looked alike, which was no bargain for her. Like him, Paula was short and stocky—she would have to watch her weight all her life—with a slightly yellowish, not very good skin whose defects could not quite be covered over with makeup. Her hair was a color she used to describe as "dishwater brown," straight and rather thin, and as a girl she wore it in bangs over her somewhat too broad forehead. Her brother Jerry meanwhile had inherited their mother's dark good looks and slender frame. Paula felt that she could have put them to better use, but there was nothing to be done about it. One of the things Paula had learned from her father was to accept things as they were, play the hand dealt to you, take the game as it was.

And as it was, as near as Paula could then determine, it was a pretty good game, all things considered. Her daddy was rich, as the Gershwin song had it, and her ma was good lookin'. She was conscious of having a good mind, though conscious, too, that it was a pitilessly humorous one. At some point in life, Paula told herself the morning she read of Jimmy Kogan's death, recalling the youthful good looks of Jimmy and his sister Diane, a person realizes that it is better to have a strong clear mind like her own than it is to be beautiful, with natural elegance and physical ease. I am now fifty-five years old, Paula thought, looking down at her thick ankles and back at her heavy calves, and apparently I still haven't reached that point.

At a fairly early age—perhaps even before she was ten years old—Paula began to see things from a humorous standpoint. Perhaps, being so plain, she could never regard herself as an object of romance, couldn't hope to please anyone through physical charms, therefore couldn't take herself altogether seriously. Whatever the case, the comic element in life tended to shine for her. The whole dating bit, the dance of courtship that began late in grammar school, had from the start seemed to Paula chiefly funny, an occasion for laughter and irony. Although she didn't then know what the word irony meant, or that it had already become her method of dealing with the world, she did know that it made other people, and especially men, uncomfortable. When she was a sophomore in high school a pudgy and perspiring boy named Nathan Levin—when it came to dates, Paula didn't have much choice—attempted clumsily to remove her bra in the front seat of his father's Buick at a drive-in movie, and she heard herself say, "Maybe you need testing for basic motor skills, Nathan." Less than a minute later the poor flustered boy had started the Roadmaster and was driving Paula home. Women, Paula learned, were supposed to appreciate humor—not initiate it.

Lou Kogan, who was no ironist, used to call Paula "Beautiful." "How are ya today, Beautiful?" he would ask when she came over to visit his daughter Diane, known to everyone as "Dinky" because of her size—she was not quite five feet tall when an adult—and natural delicacy. The Kogans moved onto the block when Paula was eleven. She and Dinky Kogan were the same age; Jimmy Kogan was a year and a half older than his sister, the same age and grade as Paula's brother Jerry, though Jimmy Kogan and Jerry Cohen never became close friends in the way that Dinky and Paula did.

"How are ya, Beautiful?" Lou Kogan would say, when Dinky and Paula returned from school to do their homework together in Dinky's room. "And you, Princess," he would add to his daughter, "doesn't your old man deserve a kiss?" He was almost always at home, often sitting in the kitchen, or sometimes out on the front lawn of his ranch house, built of costly limestone on a triple lot, practicing his swing by hitting cotton or plastic golf balls. For a while Paula resented the "Beautiful" business; she had a fairly good idea of just how beautiful she was. "I'm all right," she would think to herself when he greeted her, "how are things with you, Pee Wee?" But then she decided not to take it personally. "Beautiful" was probably the way Lou Kogan addressed waitresses and secretaries and his manicurist. He no doubt thought it was charming. He was not a man other people were likely to correct—not on this point or any other. He was allowed to live comfortably with the delusion that he was a charmer.

Paula and Dinky and Jimmy were driven to grammar school and picked up afterward by a man Dinky called Uncle Mickey, though, as she explained to Paula, he really wasn't her uncle. He was nice enough, with unruly hair, missing two bottom front teeth; in warmer weather, when he wore short-sleeved shirts, his right forearm showed a tattoo of a sword plunged into a heart surrounded by a wreath of tiny roses. Uncle Mickey drove them to school in an Oldsmobile, of which the Kogans had three, two Ninety-Eights and a white covertible for Mrs. Kogan. Once, when Jimmy was fifteen minutes late after school, Uncle Mickey became very nervous, locking Paula and Dinky in the car and telling them not to open the doors or even the windows for anyone, no matter who. It turned out that Jimmy was being kept for some classroom mischief; when he finally showed up, Uncle Mickey was clearly enormously relieved.

Lunt, Coyle, Greenleaf, the shady streets west of California Avenue with their pleasant, often opulent homes, most of them built since the war, were inhabited by a number of families whose money came from odd and not always licit dealings. There were families like the Coopermans, who lived directly across the street from the Cohens. Sam Cooperman was a liquor distributor,

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said to have had powerful Canadian connections that paid off handsomely during Prohibition years. The Coopermans' son Arthur was a fat boy and a considerable sissy; in the late 1940's and early 50's, Paula recollected, homosexuality, at least in that neighborhood, hadn't yet been invented. There was Irv Singer, the bookie, whose daughter Sandy had had her nose, cheeks, and chin redone by a locally famous plastic surgeon named Brent (originally Brodsky). There was Bernie Becker, who had made a ton of money selling Buicks, then blew it all buying prizefighters and getting in serious trouble by fixing fights, so that at one time both the boys and the FBI were in pursuit of him. There was Sid Goldin, the fix-it attorney, whose name was always popping up in Kup's column in the *Sun-Times* and who was into God alone knew what.

But even among these people the Kogans seemed pretty exotic. They took no part in the life of the neighborhood. The canasta games among the women; membership in Ner Tamid, the Conservative synagogue on Rosemont; the PTA meetings at Boone School—the Kogans had nothing to do with any of these things. Although Lou Kogan golfed at Twin Orchards, where Paula's parents were members, neither his wife nor his kids ever spent any time there. Paula had no recollection of the Kogans entertaining or having cousins over for holidays, or of hearing her friend Dinky mention visiting family or friends. Lou Kogan had his golf pals at Twin Orchards and his gin-rummy cronies at the Covenant Club, and of course there was the mystery of his work, to which he seemed never to go and which seemed somehow to take care of itself. Friendly enough on the surface, the Kogans kept to themselves.

Lou Kogan had his own ideas about raising children. He was very strict with his daughter. In high school Dinky was kept on a much tighter rein than Paula and all her other friends. She could have had a date every night of the week had Lou Kogan permitted it. But in fact during the middle of the week she could not go out past nine o'clock, could not go out on dates at all until her junior year, and then had to be home no later than eleven-thirty, at which time her father or Uncle Mickey could dependably be found waiting for her, generally standing in front of one of the large living-room windows.

What made this complicated was that Dinky Kogan was one of the most sought-after girls at Senn High School. She was small, bosomy, large-eyed, with dark good looks—cute, immensely intensely cute, which was, as Paula well remembered, the ideal of the day. Beyond this, Dinky seemed so nice, so genuinely good, which was to say kind, considerate, without snobbery or rivalry or meanness of any kind. Girls adored her, and she was asked to join the best clubs in the school. Boys were mad about her, attracted by her good looks, and further drawn in by her sweetness. Most boys felt protective toward Dinky; Paula herself felt something of the same kind when near her. Nothing bad, she could remember thinking, must be allowed to happen to Dinky.

Dinky did well enough in school, was appreciative of intelligence in others (she was a great audience for Paula's jokes and sharp comments), and not exactly unintelligent herself, but, Paula sensed, strangely incurious. She seemed not to have much interest in penetrating beneath the surface of things. Perhaps this was owing to her being Lou Kogan's daughter. With such a father, who knew what prodding beneath the surface might turn up? Dinky, so far as Paula could make out, did not exactly fear her father, yet at the same time her obedience to him was complete. Lou Kogan believed, for instance, that college was no place for girls; and so Dinky did not go to college and never, at least in Paula's hearing, complained about it.

As strict as Lou Kogan was with his daughter, just so loose was he with his son. When Jimmy Kogan turned sixteen, his father gave him a brand new Olds, a Delta Eighty-Eight hard-top convertible with a lush two-tone blue-and-white paint job. Paula's brother Jerry told her that Jimmy Kogan drove out with friends to the cathouses of Kankakee and Braidwood, Illinois, on weekends. Jimmy always seemed to have plenty of money; he usually carried a couple of hundred dollars on him, a serious sum for a boy in his junior year in high school in 1951. There was a rumor that he played in a high-stakes poker game that met weekly in a suite at the Somerset Hotel on Argyle and Sheridan. There was an even better rumor—again reported to Paula by her brother—that once, in the Saxony Hotel in Miami Beach, for a thousand dollars put up by a few of his father's friends, Jimmy Kogan "mixed it up" (as Jerry put it) with two lesbians while Lou Kogan's pals looked on. Were these stories true? Who knew? What Paula did know, from Dinky, was that Jimmy came and went as he pleased, keeping his own hours, doing much as he wished, living like the son of a powerful medieval baron, which, in a sense, was what he was.

Jimmy Kogan was not as good-looking as his sister, but there was nonetheless something very appealing about him, or so Paula felt. He had come into some of his mother's height, and was 5'10" or so, which was very tall for a Kogan. He was dark, and had begun shaving every day by the age of fifteen. An out-of-the-ordinary quality of tidiness, even fastidiousness, was evident in his appearance. His pants were always freshly pressed—he never wore Levis or tan chinos like the other boys at school—his dark hair carefully brushed. He somehow managed always to look as if he had stepped out of a shower only a half-hour ago. His nails were manicured. He looked like neither his father nor his mother, neither

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Jewish nor Gentile, though he had—Paula could think of no other way to describe them—very Jewish eyes.

Jimmy Kogan made quite good grades without ever appearing to study. Dinky claimed that she never saw him crack a book while at home. He appeared to manage his already fairly complicated young life with a nonchalant mastery. As Lou Kogan lived in the neighborhood without really having much to do with it, so Jimmy went to Senn High School without really having much to do with it. Sports, dating, and the rest seemed to hold out no interest for him. He had considerable charm, of a salesmanly kind, which meant that he could make all but the most suspicious people like him; and no doubt he could have had his pick of the school's best clubs and fraternities if he had been interested. But, again, he simply wasn't interested. His range of operations was already much wider.

It wasn't easy to get anything like a clear reading on Dinky and Jimmy Kogan's feelings for each other. Dinky didn't talk all that much about her brother, at least not to Paula, though when she did mention him it was always respectfully, for she had been brought up to respect the men in her family. Paula doubted that Jimmy talked about Dinky to anyone. He tended to treat her, as everyone else did, protectively, even in a proprietary way; after all, she was a Kogan woman, and as such part of the family holdings. Jimmy called his sister "Dinker," which no one else did and which must have been a childhood name; it implied an intimacy that was not otherwise permitted to show itself. Sometimes, when he didn't have business elsewhere, Jimmy gave his sister and Paula a ride home from school in the hardtop Olds. He generally said little during the drive, Dinky and Paula doing all the talking.

The summer between their sophomore and junior years in high school, Paula and Dinky went out for an evening on the town, escorted by Jimmy Kogan, to celebrate Dinky's sixteenth birthday. Lou Kogan and his wife were away for a few days on business, and had apparently told their son to show his sister a nice time. Jimmy had himself just graduated from high school, and was going to the University of Michigan in the fall (where he dropped out after a year, considering it—no doubt rightly—a waste of his time).

They drove in Lou Kogan's midnight blue Olds Ninety-Eight, Jimmy and Dinky up front, Paula alone in the back. The Edgewater Beach Hotel was still standing then, marvelously impressive in its cream-colored stucco, lanterns hung out back for dancing under the stars. The night was warm, the sky clear. Dinky and Paula wore summer dresses and high heels. Jimmy wore white trousers and a powder-blue blazer with a dark blue knit tie. A light breeze blew upon Paula sitting alone in the back of the cavernous Olds. The lights from oncoming cars gliding northward on the Outer Drive blinked beguilingly. Life, thought Paula, does have its lovely moments.

Jimmy began the evening with dinner in the Empire Room at the Palmer House. He had booked a table, but the *maître d'*, a man with black marcelled hair and a thin mustache in the French style, seemed to know him anyway and didn't even bother to check his reservations book. After he had seated them at a very good table Jimmy shook his hand, into which, Paula noted, he slipped a ten-dollar bill. They ate pinkish prime rib and a light salad; for dessert Jimmy had ordered baked Alaska. "Happy birthday, beautiful sister," he said when it arrived.

After dinner they walked over to the Blue Note, where they listened to a young Sarah Vaughan. Being under age, Paula and Dinky drank Cokes; Jimmy , who was also under age, ordered a Scotch and water, which he scarcely touched. Later they dropped in at The Black Orchid where a new, dazzlingly handsome singer named Harry Belafonte was performing. Further north on Rush Street they stopped at Mister Kelly's, where they heard a comedian whose name Paula could no longer remember.

What she did remember, most distinctly, was that back in the car—it was around one-thirty in the morning—Jimmy said that he had to make a little pick-up on Fulton Street. They drove into the darkened neighborhood—it was one of the food-marketing centers in town—past a great many loading docks and large doors bolted with weighty locks. Jimmy stopped the Olds. "Keep the doors locked," he said, as he left the car. "I'll be back in a minute." He climbed the stairs to a dock above which a sign read Pachetti Produce. From the back seat, Paula could see him kick noisily at a steel-shuttered door. After a short while, it swung back and a large black man with bloodshot eyes came out. He and Jimmy exchanged a few words. Then the black man went back, reemerging thirty or so seconds later with a paper bag which he handed to Jimmy, who shook hands with him and then returned to the car.

Jimmy tossed the bag in the back seat, started the car, and turned it in the direction of the Drive. "Paula," he said, "do me a favor. There's some money in that bag. Count it and let me know how much you get." Paula removed eighteen packets of greasy bills, each bound by a rubber band, and in the glint of the street lights counted every one as the Olds whisked northward on the Drive toward home while a disc jocky named Jay Andres played light classics on the radio. The total came to $9,000. When Paula reported this to Jimmy he said merely, "Good. Thanks."

It was on another Saturday night, two weeks later, when Paula went over to the Kogan house to borrow some tennis balls from

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Dinky, who was out for the evening with her parents, that she next saw Jimmy. He answered the door in a white terry-cloth robe and dark blue pajama bottoms held up by a drawstring at his taut small waist. His hair was still wet, though brushed back off his face. When Paula told him what she wanted, he invited her to come in while he looked around for a can of balls. She waited in the living room. It always seemed to her that there was something oddly unlived-in about the Kogans' house. The furniture always seemed too new, and there was usually nothing on the walls: no paintings, no prints, no family pictures. It was as if the family that owned the place hadn't yet moved in.

Jimmy returned with an unopened can of Wilson balls, which he handed over to Paula.

"Where're you playing?" he asked.

"Just at the park, Indian Boundary," she said. "Tomorrow morning, with Lenore Fink."

"It's a tough game, tennis, at least without lessons. Nobody ever learns to play it very well on their own."

As they continued talking, Paula sensed in Jimmy Kogan's sudden interest that he was going to attempt to seduce her. She decided, on the spot, right then and there, that if he tried, she would let him.

And he did try—and she let him.

It took place in the Kogans' basement, on a Naugahyde sofa, among knotty-pine walls with a slot machine over in a far corner. Paula regretted the heaviness of her legs. She felt slightly unclean next to Jimmy Kogan. The act itself seemed awkward and inelegant. She was glad it was over quickly. Ah, sweet mystery of life, she thought, I still haven't found you. Jimmy Kogan's lean and hard body lay resting on hers, he breathing more heavily than she, finished before she had even begun. He acted grateful afterward, and also a trifle guilty. Nothing was said about their ever going out together, or of her perhaps traveling up to Ann Arbor for a weekend at college. Paula thought maybe Jimmy was a little ashamed of himself, acting under the impulse the boys at school called horniness. After all, Lou Kogan's son ought to be able to do better than his little sister's girlfriend—her, as Paula would have been the first to say, none-too-pretty girlfriend.

If she were right about this, at least she didn't have to worry about his telling anyone about his easy conquest. Apparently he never did. Certainly, Dinky never mentioned it or behaved any differently toward her. Three weeks later, Jimmy went off to college. Whenever she saw him afterward, though he was friendly, he acted as if nothing had happened between them. No one else had a notion that anything had happened, either. Years later, after Paula herself had married, at a pre-nuptial dinner for her brother, she felt herself inwardly blushing as her father, with a drink too many in him, announced that he could remember worrying, when his daughter was sixteen, that she wasn't a virgin and that his son was. The line got a big laugh.

Paula and Dinky remained good friends through high school, even double-dating the night of the senior prom, when Dinky's father let her stay out until two o'clock in the morning. Since Lou Kogan didn't believe in girls going to college, Dinky, sadly but ungrudgingly, stayed in Chicago, working as a bookkeeper for a cousin who sold uniforms to municipal employees—policemen, firemen, transit-authority workers—on Roosevelt Road. Paula went to the University of Illinois, where she got her elementary-school teacher's certificate and met her future husband. David Melnick was at Illinois to study accounting. He was a Phi Sig Delt, Paula an SDT. He was plumpish, wore glasses, was already beginning to lose his hair, but was solid, kind, with an appreciative sense of humor. David adored her, Paula felt it from the first. She felt that here was a man she could trust, with whom she could say exactly what she thought, who didn't seem to mind the possibility that she just might be more intelligent than he.

Paula and David didn't marry until two years after his graduation. His family, which owned a neighborhood dry-cleaning store, wasn't doing all that well, and David didn't want to start out married life by taking help from Paula's parents. He passed his CPA exam the year after his graduation, the same year that Paula graduated. She began teaching at Joyce Kilmer School, living at home, and the following year they married and moved into a one-bedroom apartment in Skokie.

DINKY KOGAN had married two years before, the first of her three marriages, to a salesman ten years older than she named Herbie Miller. He was tall, good looking, and had the successful salesman's easy flow of cheerful talk. The wedding was a spectacular event. Dinner for 450 at the Ambassador West. "Only a man who has no real friends could throw such a big wedding for his daughter," was Paula's father's comment. He and his wife were invited and so was nearly everyone else on the block. Paula was one of the bridesmaids.

"An extravaganza," said Paula, describing the Kogan wedding plans to her mother, "a true Cecil B. DeMille production." A 22-piece orchestra had been hired; there would be elaborate ice sculptures, an eight-course dinner, champagne fountains—the works.

What Paula chiefly remembered about the wedding was the noise. The clash of cutlery and the buzz of conversation with Lou Breese's orchestra going at it relentlessly while photographers hopped about crying for attention and smiles to get imperishable shots of each of the 60 tables as waiters dodged with heavily laden trays—all this made for an impressive din. Paula looked around

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the room to spot famous gangsters. No shortage of suspicious looking characters in the room, she thought, but the only one she recognized was Jake ("The Barber") Factor, who had supposedly once been kidnapped by a man named Roger Touhy; Touhy went to prison for the alleged kidnapping and, not long after being paroled, was murdered in the Chicago streets. Jake the Barber, Paula thought, didn't look all that kidnappable. His nickname derived from the darkness of his beard, which had the texture of tree bark.

Like Paula, Jimmy Kogan was a member of the wedding party. Her "deflowerer," as she jokingly thought of him, had grown thicker and come to look more authoritative over the past five years. He was, as always, cordial to her; and, again as always, gave no hint of their fling in his family's basement. Even now Paula could not help asking why she had allowed herself that brief business with Jimmy Kogan. She knew that some women were stimulated by worthlessness in men, but she also knew she wasn't one of them; not she, who planned to marry an accountant. No, the more she thought about it, the more she felt that the attraction was danger. Jimmy Kogan, even as a kid of eighteen, lived close to danger. Paula would never forget that rumpled brown paper bag with its $9,000. What did the money come from? Gambling? Prostitution? Payoffs of one sort or another? And why was it given to Jimmy? From whom did it come? To whom was it going? Rich stuff, danger, and Paula, that most commonsensical of young women, had to admit, sexy stuff, too.

But it had its limitations, and these were severe. Living outside the law, in an atmosphere of danger, might make a man seem more interesting, but if Lou Kogan were any example, it didn't add much to his refinement. The one moment Paula would never forget from the wedding was when Dinky, looking even more beautiful than brides are supposed to look, in her dazzling wedding gown, approached her father, who was drinking with Jake the Barber at one of the three bars in the room.

"Daddy," Dinky said, "I just wanted to thank you for making this, the happiest night of my life, possible. Thank you, Daddy—for everything."

"You better smile, baby," Lou Kogan replied, a bit drunk, his hand on Jake the Barber's hulking shoulder, "you cost me a shit-load."

HERBIE MILLER, Dinky's husband, happened to be a drunk, a fact he was able to keep hidden from Dinky throughout their courtship and nearly the entire first year of their marriage. He wasn't an everyday drinker, but a man who went in for binges, taking off days at a time to devote to drinking. Usually he did this under the guise of being out of town, selling—Dinky wasn't one to question his whereabouts—but once he didn't show up at home for four straight days when there had been no word of his having to be away. Jimmy Kogan, at Dinky's urging, found him, unconscious, with a roomful of empty bourbon bottles, at the Del Prado Hotel on the South Side. The Kogan family sent him to a sanitarium to dry out, put him in treatment, even at one point threatened to kill him if he didn't quit drinking (Mob therapy, Paula called it, when she later heard about it), but it was no go: a drunk remained a drunk, and an unfit husband for Lou Kogan's daughter. Dinky divorced Herbie, charging mental cruelty, the same year Paula graduated from the University of Illinois.

Larry Katz, Dinky's second husband, was in the advertising business. Dinky and Larry, Paula and David, double-dated three or four times. He, too, was good-looking, but small and dapper, a man who wore Italian loafers, smoked French cigarettes, and elegantly fingered a gold Dunhill lighter. Paula found him amusing, noted that he had no interest in boozing, and thought him dedicated to Dinky, which he was. The problem turned out to be that he was also dedicated to a number of other women. Three years into their marriage Dinky learned that Larry was a compulsive chaser. A girl who looked about eighteen or nineteen, a secretary at his office, showed up at their house in Lincolnwood one gray autumn afternoon to plead with Dinky to give Larry his freedom so that he could marry her. It was the first she had heard about her husband's needing his freedom; soon she would discover that he had been taking it without asking for years. Dinky never told her father or her brother about her husband's carryings-on. She would have left him long before she eventually did, which was after five years of marriage, but she had had two children with him—a boy Richard, a girl Karen—and tried to hold things together as long as she could. "I'd rather be married to a drunk," she once told Paula, "you get fewer late night phone calls."

Dinky was living alone with her two kids in the house in Lincolnwood when Lou Kogan, at seventy-two, died, alone, in bed watching television, of a heart attack. He was found the following morning by the maid, who let herself into the Lunt Avenue house at eight o'clock. Mary Kogan was in Phoenix, visiting her sister. Jimmy handled the funeral details. A small-type obituary appeared in the *Trib* and in the *Sun-Times*. Lou Kogan, unlike his son, was never considered newsworthy. Paula went to the funeral at Piser-Weinstein Chapel on Peterson Avenue. A rabbi, who had never known Lou Kogan, spoke of his love for his family and joked about his passion for golf. All quite hollow, Paula thought, from her seat seven rows behind Dinky and her children and Jimmy Kogan and his wife (the daughter of a lawyer with powerful First Ward connections) and their two daugthers. As the rabbi rattled on about the importance of memory in reconciling us to death, Paula let her mind contemplate the cool

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injustice of the world. Her own father was currently wandering the halls of the Northwest Home for the Jewish Aged with Alzheimer's disease; a contemporary with whom she and Dinky had gone to high school had recently died after a prolonged struggle with multiple sclerosis; her mother had been suffering for the past four years with shingles (not to speak of her diabetes)—and Lou Kogan, a man who so far as anyone knew never did anything for anyone, Lou Kogan gets to slip gently off while watching the *Johnny Carson Show*. He got away with it one last time.

DINKY got away with nothing. Shortly after her third marriage, at forty-three, to a nice guy (at last) named Arnie Ashen, who was in the drapery business, she had her first mastectomy. She broke down when she told Paula about it, in Paula's kitchen, and Paula, holding her friend in her arms, wept too. Poor Dinky, whom everyone wanted to protect but whom no one could—not from bad marriages, not from cancer, not from anything serious. She had her second two years later, and cancer next showed up eighteen months after that in the form of leukemia. Along with other friends, Paula gave blood when vast quantities of it were needed toward the end.

Paula and David went together to the funeral service for Dinky at Piser-Weinstein. But it being a Wednesday and less than a month before tax-filing time, David returned to his office and Paula drove out to Westlawn Cemetery following the small funeral procession in her car alone. There, under a leaden Chicago sky, a rabbi intoning the Kaddish in a baritone voice with a European accent, Diane Kogan, forty-seven, mother of two, was slowly cranked down into the earth in a grave next to her father's. A cold March wind lashed Paula's face, and her tears felt frozen on her cheek.

Family and friends were invited back to Mary Kogan's after the funeral. Dinky's mother still lived in the ranch house on Lunt. After 25 years, the once-lovely old neighborhood looked much diminished. Many of the houses originally built in double and triple lots had sold off their extra land, and newer, less grand homes had been built next to them. The older houses seemed a touch shabby; on a number of them the trim on windows and doors needed paint; everywhere the landscaping seemed less luxurious. Two Filipino children emerged from the front door of the Georgian house Paula and her brother had grown up in. The Cooperman house, which had once seemed to Paula a mansion, with the land surrounding it now sold off and built on, seemed merely too big, even slightly vulgar.

The Kogan house, too, looked a little the worse for wear. Its limestone had not weathered well, and the day didn't do much to bring out its highlights. Inside it had the same slightly unlived-in Kogan feel that Paula remembered from her girlhood. Dinky's son Richard, fourteen and wearing a mourner's black ribbon on the lapel of his gray suit, met Paula at the front door. She hugged the boy, kissing him lightly on the cheek. He told her there was coffee and food set out in the dining room. Paula wasn't at all hungry. She wanted to wander off to Dinky's old room, where they used to do their homework together, and made a mental note to do so before leaving. Instead she walked down to the basement through the door off the kitchen. It was unchanged: the bar ("wet bar," they used to call it in the real-estate ads of the day) in one corner, the now almost antique slot machine in another corner, a table set up for a card game, a University of Michigan pennant in blue and gold on one wall, the old Naugahyde sofa.

PAULA heard footsteps on the stairs and looked up from her seat on the couch to see Jimmy Kogan. She recognized him more from newspaper photographs and television shots than from their days growing up together. It was no longer possible to discover the boy in the man. Jimmy had grown thicker, looked padded. He had more gravity than his father. He wore a black suit, a shirt with dark stripes, a black knit tie; as a member of the immediate family of the deceased, he, too, had a black ribbon on his lapel. Paula thought she detected something hard around his mouth. He wore glasses, aviator type, slightly tinted, which made it difficult to look into his eyes. Those eyes, Paula knew, must have seen a lot. Had Jimmy Kogan ever ordered a man killed? Had he ever killed a man himself? In an unwelcome fugitive thought, it occurred to her that it would be much more interesting to sleep with him now than when they were both kids.

"Paula Cohen," he said, with a broad smile, "if it weren't for the solemnity of the occasion, I'd suggest a quickie."

"It couldn't be quicker than the last time," she answered, deciding on the spot not to be daunted. "And by the way, my married name is Melnick."

"Ah," he said, "you're cruel, Mrs. Melnick."

"It takes a shark to get a shark."

"How about that 'shark' business? Bet all those years you were growing up on this block you had no idea you were living a few doors down from a shark."

"Listen, you could have done a lot worse. You could have been James 'Greasy Thumb' Kogan or James 'Teats' Kogan or who knows what else. Thank the Lord for small favors."

"How has life treated you, Paula?" he asked, an earnest note in his voice.

"Decently, I suppose. I'm happy in my marriage. I have two sons. I've not had any other than the standard misfortunes. It's been a quiet life, I guess, but I have no great complaints."

"We get the life we choose," Jimmy said authoritatively.

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"I'm not sure Dinky chose hers," Paula answered.

"I got news for you. Life is pretty much winners and losers, with a few people choosing not to play and so they get to watch the game from the sidelines, like yourself. But no matter which role you play, there's a price to pay, and everyone pays it, even eventually the winners."

"And your life?" Paula asked. "Did you choose it?"

"I did," he said, "and young, though sometimes I think it chose me. Where my love of action came from I don't know. Probably from the same place as Dinky's lousy taste in husbands. Still, the action has given me what pleasure and success I've had, and it will probably bring me down in the end. All I know is you have to roll the dice when you have 'em, or you get the hell away from the table. I've always liked it at the table."

Paula thought of but said nothing about the activities that had brought him to the table and kept him there. In the atmosphere in which they had been brought up, it wouldn't make much sense to drag in conventional morality.

"The death of someone like my sister, who never harmed anyone, kind of makes you wonder who's calling the shots. But I'm conning you. I think I knew very early in life—a lot earlier than most—that no one is calling them. It's all arbitrary. It's every man for himself, with real pity reserved for those suckers who think the whole thing makes sense. It don't. You have my word on it."

"So what's the point of it?"

"Don't let it get you down, Paula, but there isn't any. There's only carrying on your business, doing what you do best, enjoying the things that give you pleasure, and waiting till the call comes telling you it's over. Don't worry about that call, by the way. It'll come."

YEARS later, reading about Jimmy Kogan's body in the trunk of his car in the quiet suburb of Edgebrook, Paula recalled this, their final conversation, with great clarity. She wondered if, when his call came, Jimmy was as ready for it as, on the day of his sister's funeral, he appeared to be. She wondered if he was able to face what must have been a gruesome death with courage. She wondered, too, if he were right in what he said about the real suckers in life being those who thought the world could be shown to make sense. His own death, given the way he lived, certainly made perfect sense. What didn't quite make sense was how desolate it left Paula Melnick.

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Suicide of an Elite?

Edward N. Saveth

THERE is a tendency in books about the Vietnam war—notably David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* (1969) and now Patrick Lloyd Hatcher's *The Suicide of an Elite* (1990)*—to focus on the role of a not very precisely defined "elite" and/or "establishment." Thus, Hatcher speaks of the miraculous growth of "a small internationalist elite, operating on both major American political parties" which converted a staunchly "unilateralist" state—the America of 1783 to 1939—to the assertive internationalism of the World War II era and beyond, and then allegedly committed suicide in Vietnam. Similarly, according to Godfrey Hodgson in *The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson* (1990),† these internationalists were a nonpartisan and "a self-recruiting group," who "exercised practical influence on the course of American defense and foreign policy." They included Stimson himself, Dean Acheson, Charles E. Bohlen, George F. Kennan, Robert A. Lovett, and John J. McCloy, whose composite careers were the substance of yet another book, *The Wise Men* by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas (1986).

These people, none of whom ever held elective office, found diplomacy particularly attractive because, as Henry Adams said in *The Education*, circa 1904, the conduct of foreign affairs was the most aristocratic branch of American government in that it was the least susceptible to popular pressures. (This, of course, later changed.) All of Adams's forebears had been active in diplomacy—two of them had also been elected President—and even he, resisting appointment and power, played the role of *éminence grise* to his close friend, John Hay, who was Secretary of State to Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. In Hodgson's "self-recruiting elite," Hay begat Elihu Root and Root begat Henry L. Stimson and Stimson begat McGeorge Bundy, who was the son of Harvey Bundy, who had served Stimson as Assistant Secretary of War in the Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt administrations.

Many of those men fitted loosely into the social category of patricians—characterized by Henry Adams's great-grandfather, John Adams, in the middle of the 18th century, as "men of family, property, and education." Lower levels of State Department personnel also reflected this pattern, owing mainly to the influence of Joseph C. Grew, a Philadelphia patrician who, very early in the 20th century, entered the diplomatic service rather than the family banking business. Through more than four decades in a variety of postings, Grew put his stamp on departmental personnel. He stood ready to disqualify applicants who might pass the written examinations mandated by the Rogers Act of 1924 but who did not conform to a type which was fixed by the right family, prepping at Groton or St. Paul's, and attendance at an Ivy League college. George F. Kennan, Princeton-educated but no patrician, personally insecure with a none-too-good academic record, believed that he owed his appointment to the mother of one of his classmates, who was a Cabot, and who hosted a dinner for Grew to which Kennan was invited. Seventy-five percent of embassy secretaries appointed between 1914 and 1922 were from Eastern preparatory schools and from Ivy League colleges. "A pretty good club," someone wrote of the State Department.

Members of the "club" were qualified by genealogy to appreciate the advice given by McGeorge Bundy in his 1968 Godkin lecture at Harvard. In choosing a career, Bundy said, "if there is a serious family tradition you should think twice before you turn away from it. . . . To succeed to an established role can save extremely valuable time. . . . I respect the reinforcement of tradition, and names like Adams and Roosevelt remind us that this is not an un-American notion."

BUT the year in which Bundy delivered this lecture, 1968, was rather late for the "club." On November 29, 1968, Henry Kissinger, not only foreign-born but Jewish, was named by President Richard Nixon as his Assistant for National Security Affairs. Why did Nixon appoint Kissinger who was, after all, a Rockefeller Republican, not a Nixon man? One reason is that Nixon was an outsider, or saw himself as such. He hated the establishment, which he viewed as constituted of highly educated and influential people who were also marked by intellectual arrogance, an obsession with style, fashion, and class, and a permissive attitude toward drugs. Nixon also blamed the establishment for the loss of the Vietnam war. At one point he instructed his aide, H.R. Haldeman, to "quit recruiting from any of the Ivy League schools." Nixon aspired to create a new group of foreign-policy administrators that was more open to middle-class people like himself and more sensitive

EDWARD N. SAVETH *is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at SUNY. He is currently writing a book on patrician political behavior.*

* Stanford University Press, 429 pp., $35.00.
† Knopf, 402 pp., $24.95.

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to middle-class values to the extent that the latter could be defined.

Kissinger, then, commended himself to Nixon because he too was an outsider. Bundy, Kissinger recalled, tended "to treat me with the combination of politeness and subconscious condescension that upper-class Bostonians reserve for people of, by New England standards, exotic backgrounds and excessively intense personal style."

Yet Kissinger was also an insider to the extent that his rise was by way of traditional establishement paths: Harvard, the Council on Foreign Relations, Nelson Rockefeller. In this respect, he was a strange choice for Nixon. But Kissinger, in attempting to define the role of the National Security Council as an agency for the conduct of foreign policy that would bypass the State Department and center foreign policy in the White House, was simultaneously acting upon Nixon's complaint that the State Department was "dominated by the Ivy League colleges" and "liberalism."

Even before 1968, however, the number of Ph.D.'s in the State Department had been growing at the expense of the old establishment. "The years from 1947 to 1968," writes Hodgson, "were the heyday of the American foreign-policy establishment." Yet at the same time, Hodgson notes, "the geographical and sociological cachement [for the recruiting of State Department personnel] widened considerably, if for no other reason than that the GI bill enabled almost any keen young man of average intelligence to get into a good school." Hodgson might have added that lowering the discriminatory barriers in the Ivy League enabled men of foreign birth like Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski and native Americans of non-Wasp background to be admitted. They studied international relations, became eligible for faculty appointments, and were recruited as consultants to prestigious organizations like the Council on Foreign Relations.

This Ph.D. route gradually replaced law school and the Wall Street law firm as (in Hodgson's words) "the prime avenue to the seats of the establishment." The result was that the hubris of the traditional State Department establishment, grounded in genealogy, confronted the hubris of the political scientist with the somewhat questionable reputation of that discipline for problem-solving. (One is reminded of Max Weber's belief that bureaucracy ranks with democracy as an enemy of aristocracy.)

Brzezinski, like Kissinger, was an outsider with insider credentials: Harvard, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Columbia faculty, the Trilateral Commission. Like Kissinger in relation to Nixon, Brzezinski became National Security Adviser to an outsider President, Jimmy Carter of Plains, Georgia. Ever conscious of being of Polish origin and a Catholic, Brzezinski noted that Carter was not a member of the Wasp elite, "and it certainly was not easy for me to relate to it, either." Nevertheless, Carter balanced his appointment of Brzezinski by naming as his Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, a lawyer who qualified as an establishment figure and who was not overly fond of Brzezinski. Another foreign-policy patrician involved in the Carter administration, Averell Harriman, considered Brzezinski an ill-mannered Pole who wanted to involve the United States in a war with Russia. But Carter liked "Zbig" and so did his wife, Rosalynn.

Brzezinski granted that Vance "epitomized that which is best in both the Anglo-American tradition and Wasp values." As a member of the "once-dominant Wasp elite" and the legal profession, continued Brzezinski, Vance functioned in accordance with "values and rules" which were of declining relevance both domestically and overseas. Vance, allegedly, was reluctant to use force in dealing with "thugs" on the international scene.

However, Brzezinski's one experience with the use of force—the attempt to free the American hostages held by Iran—foundered in the desert. Brzezinski had led Carter into this disastrous episode over the opposition of Vance, who resigned. This left an opening for Brzezinski to follow in Kissinger's footsteps into the position of Secretary of State. But the exigencies of domestic politics intervened. Confronted by the 1980 elections, Carter needed all the support he could muster, and Senator Edmund Muskie became Secretary of State. Brzezinski professed not to mind because Carter, Brzezinski said, really wanted to be his own Secretary of State.

Why did Vance fail to fight back against Brzezinski? According to two members of Vance's staff, Anthony Lake and Leslie Gelb (writing in collaboration with I.M. Destler), Vance neither knew nor wanted to learn how to do so: "Vance would live by the gentlemen's rules from the old era—and eventually be hit by the new rules. . . . He did not want to recognize the lengths to which Brzezinski and his allies would go in trying to win." Also, Vance might have been experiencing a spell of traditional patrician malaise, a failure of nerve which, decades earlier, the patrician man of letters, Charles Eliot Norton, had ascribed to the descendants of those who first came to these shores. Brzezinski sensed something of this sort when Vance was reluctant to provide the deposed Shah of Iran with a sanctuary in the U.S. He later wrote that over this issue

> our national honor was at stake. It bothered me . . . that the one to speak up for American honor was a naturalized American. I wondered what this indicated about the current American elite and whether we were not seeing here symptoms of a deeper national problem.

Destler, Gelb, and Lake are sympathetic to Vance. They lament the passing of the

> old establishment of relatively homogeneous, part-time, pragmatic, and mostly bipartisan Northeasterners [which] has been subsumed by a much larger, more diverse elite of full-time foreign-policy professionals. Their diversity and expertise are valuable. But they are far more political and ideological than their predecessors.

The establishment, for all its shortcomings and tendency toward being doctrinaire, served as

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> a brake on politics. It stood for common sense, a willingness to bear out and accommodate other views within a certain range, and a sense of responsibility and proportion about policies and institutions. Today's foreign-policy elites help to drive policy into domestic politics and push debates toward the extremes.

This is also Hodgson's opinion, expressed in his biography of Stimson. Professor F.C. Mosher, once editor of the *Public Administration Review*, lamented in 1968 the absence in the American public service of "an administrative class of gentlemen" who would serve as "generalists."

Yet as Destler, Gelb, and Lake admit, there is no returning to the days when the foreign policy of the United States could be conducted on a part-time basis by patricians or other establishment figures commuting between the law offices and board rooms of Wall Street and Washington. Professionals have become essential. And in any case, it is by no means clear that the old establishment was that much better than the new elite.

On the other hand, contrary to what both Kissinger and Brzezinski have alleged, the so-called Wasp establishment did possess a long view of American foreign policy, even an ideology. Defined by Henry Adams, Theodore Roosevelt, and John Hay, among others, its core was linkage to England in the context of Eurocentrism. Adams's concept of an Atlantic civilization halted at the Elbe, beyond which was the "barbarism" of Russia and China which Adams saw as a glacial mass threatening to crush Europe. In the context of the Atlantic system, Adams believed that geography had cast Germany as a consistent element of disquiet—not powerful enough to control Europe but sufficiently strong to try. Adams even predicted with uncanny accuracy the date of the outbreak of World War I, though he did not live long enough to see World War II. Significantly, it was in defense of NATO, the military extension of Atlanticism, that Kissinger in May 1971 assembled the "Old Guard"—among them John J. McCloy, George Ball, Henry Cabot Lodge, Robert Lovett, and others—which was to be, for some of them, a last public service.

Atlanticism originally presupposed a passive, undeveloped third world which Atlanticists believed should be more or less policed by the "civilized" nations. This aspect of what Vance characterizes as "our traditional understanding" he finds strained by the fact that "by the year 2000 eight of every ten people will live in the developing world." Vance does not propose a policy to deal with this situation, and neither does Brzezinski, who is also aware of the demographic facts.

One means of countering these facts is force. Brzezinski attacks Vance for preferring to "litigate issues endlessly, to shy away from the unavoidable ingredient of force in dealing with contemporary international realities," and for having an excessive faith that all issues can be resolved by compromise. "Unfortunately, in a revolutionary age, such an approach more often than not tends to be exploited by the Qaddafis, Khomeinis, or even the Brezhnevs or Begins of our age." This contrasts strikingly with Brzezinski's pleas for litigation and/or compromise prior to the war with Iraq and his shying away from the ingredient of force against Saddam Hussein.

Actually, the Wasp-patrician tradition of an Atlantic civilization, to which Brzezinski sees Vance as an heir, was not marked by a reluctance to use force. The essence of Atlanticism in the view of Theodore Roosevelt, that quintessential Wasp patrician, was the idea of a superior civilization and the willingness to defend it. Henry Stimson, nine years younger than Roosevelt, idolized the older man, and Hodgson's persistent emphasis in his biography of Stimson is upon the martial spirit that impelled this distinguished public servant. Stimson was Secretary of War for William Howard Taft, Secretary of State for Herbert Hoover, and again Secretary of War for Franklin Roosevelt. He saw front-line action in World War I at the age of fifty. "Colonel" was the title by which he preferred to be addressed. Theodore Roosevelt, Stimson, and very many other patricians disproportionately supported the preparedness movement prior to World War I, as well as the war itself. Before World War II, patricians were also disproportionately represented in the Committee to Defend America by Supporting the Allies. Finally, not to be found "soft" on Communism was an impelling circumstance dictating patrician support of the Vietnam war, which Kissinger identified with the foreign-policy establishment and which, he believes, contributed to its demise.

Everyman's tough guy, especially Hatcher's, is President Lyndon Johnson. But Johnson's determination to prosecute the Vietnam war was at least partly a creature of the influence of his patrician advisers, toward whom he felt a reluctant deference. To Johnson, the patricians in his entourage were, collectively, "Harvards," who had come into the world fully clothed, whereas he felt himself naked no matter how much power he had acquired. "My Daddy always told me," Johnson recalled, "that if I brushed up against the grindstone of life, I'd come away with far more polish than I could ever get at Harvard or Yale. I wanted to believe him, but somehow I never could. . . ."

The present Secretary of State, James A. Baker 3d, is a scion of old Texas money, educated at Princeton with a law degree from the University of Texas, rather than an advanced degree in international relations. His patrician status is affirmed by his friendship with George Herbert Walker Bush, and his Southwest origin is suggestive of where future patricians may be coming from. How much the stand of these men during the Persian Gulf crisis can be attributed to traditional patrician toughness, of the sort exhibited by Stimson—"somebody has got to show some guts"—is difficult to say. It is well known that George Bush has installed a portrait of Stimson's idol, Theodore Roosevelt, in the cabinet meet-

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ing room. It is not known to what extent, if any, Bush shares Roosevelt's belief that "civilized" nations should somehow control the "uncivilized."

In any case, none of this adds up to Hatcher's conception of elite "suicide." There has been change in the foreign-policy elite involving differences in training and background, but it is questionable whether there has been a decline or even whether foreign policy itself has been all that much affected. Finally, after victory in the Persian Gulf, George Bush's claim to have "kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all" eliminates what had been the prime cause of the alleged elite "suicide." George Bush is a true heir to the Theodore Roosevelt, Root, Stimson, and Acheson tradition, which is now in place in the State Department.

The Pollster & the Nazis

Leo Bogart

How do we come to form our views, individually and collectively? This question bemused ancient philosophers, and continues to fascinate contemporary students of public opinion. In the last few years, no theory on this topic has been more widely discussed than that of the "spiral of silence," advanced in a book by that name, subtitled "Public Opinion—Our Social Skin," by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann-Maier-Leibnitz.* The author is Germany's leading pollster, a prominent adviser to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and the 1990 winner of the Helen Dinerman Award (for outstanding contributions to research methodology) of the World Association for Public Opinion Research. Her book, originally published in Germany in 1980, has just appeared there in a new edition.

Noelle's thesis is that public opinion tends to conform to whatever is generally supposed to be the majority view on an issue, since those who already hold that view feel comfortable in expressing it, while those who think otherwise are reluctant to speak up. This same hypothesis was advanced in 1968 by Gary Schulman, but he unfortunately neglected to give it a memorable label, and has not won any awards for it. The "bandwagon effect" is, in fact, a long-familiar and much-studied phenomenon in public-opinion research.

Nevertheless, Noelle believes that most public-opinion research still ignores or minimizes the force of group pressure. "Fascinated by the ideal of the self-reliant, independent individual," she writes, "scholars have hardly noticed the existence of the isolated individual fearful of the opinion of his peers." To support this portrait of a public cowering in apprehension that its thoughts may be out of line with those of the majority, Noelle cites findings of surveys, conducted by her own *Institut fuer Demoskopie* at Allensbach/Bodensee, which show evidence of bandwagoning in the course of election campaigns.

In several other studies, Noelle has asked people about their willingness to express their views on a controversial subject to strangers in a train compartment who have already made their own opinions known; individuals who share the strangers' opinions more often say they would be willing to speak up than those who do not. She also refers to the laboratory experiments of Solomon Asch, who found that people tend to modify their own perceptions (for example, of the comparative lengths of a series of lines) to accord with those of others (including confederates of the experimenter, planted in the group to distort the judgments of the experimental subjects). There is, she apparently believes, a deep-seated biological basis for this.

Though it has aroused considerable attention, the spiral-of-silence theory has not been convincingly corroborated. A 1988 survey of eleven countries on the likelihood of a nuclear war, for example, found no support for the hypothesis that people known to hold minority opinions are less willing to talk than others. A case history of the anti-Marcos revolt in the Philippines also came up with contradictory evidence.

In effect, Noelle makes no allowance for such perennial issues in public-opinion theory as the level of information people have on matters of public debate, their readiness to express opinions on subjects of varying controversy and sensitivity, the sense of personal

LEO BOGART, *a new contributor, is Adjunct Professor of Marketing at New York University and the author of* Preserving the Press *and other books.*

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commitment or responsibility they bring to a subject, and the intensity with which they hold their opinions. Opinion researchers are highly aware that the answers they get depend on the wording, sequence, and context of the questions, and on the respondent's relation to the interviewer. It is incontrovertible that we all dissemble our views for reasons of social convenience and to avoid unnecessary hassles. Religion and politics may be banned at the dinner table, but there are appropriate forums where such delicate matters can be discussed freely and without inhibition.

Of course people like to be on the winning side, and generally rally behind the winner of a free election. Noelle says that people's views of who is winning or of what the public thinks are largely formed by journalists, and by the media generally. But media reports on public opinion today, in both Europe and the United States, are largely based on what the polls show—a point of which Noelle takes no notice.

The power of the polls to set benchmarks against which people can assess their own beliefs and inclinations represents a major shift in the way political leaders gauge public opinion, and has made many of them heavily dependent upon practitioners of that craft. Noelle herself has been called the "Pope" (*die Paebstin*) of German opinion research by the German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, which describes her relationship to Chancellor Kohl as follows: "Just as important [as her political counsel], she strengthens him in the conviction that he doesn't need to worry himself about intellectuals."

For anyone pondering the spiral-of-silence hypothesis, the most convincing demonstration of its validity would appear to be the reaction of Germans to the events that followed the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor in 1933. Although only 37 percent of the electorate had voted for the Nazis, the rest were intimidated into acquiescence, which was rapidly converted to active support. Although opinion surveys were not conducted under the Nazis, confidential reports on the mood of the people were prepared by the Domestic News Service of the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*). This research was directed by SS-*Gruppenfuehrer* Otto Ohlendorf, who also had another job: as head of an *Einsatzgruppe* that murdered 90,000 people, he demonstrated how practice and theory could go hand in hand.

Any public-opinion analyst, especially a German one, must be especially concerned with the question of how a people that prided itself on its high level of civilization could be transformed within a few years into accomplices to unprecedented barbarities. But this question does not arise in Noelle's book. There are in fact only three passing references to the Nazi period. The first is especially worth noting:

> Mobs based on timeless elements are typically aroused by instinctive reactions. . . . It is on this basis that the Nazi minister of propaganda Goebbels was able to mobilize a full stadium with his rallying call, Do you want to have total war?

At the time, however, Noelle wrote quite differently about Goebbels from the way she does in *The Spiral of Silence*. In her first book, a primer on American opinion and media research published in 1940, she quoted him with enthusiasm:

> "The people [*das Volk*] will no longer be left to its own devices. . . . The people shall begin to think as a unit, to react as a unit and to place itself at the disposal of the government with complete sympathy."

To this Noelle added an interesting suggestion that remarkably prefigured today's use of polls to assist politicians in the manipulation of public opinion:

> To fulfill these tasks, a reliable system of mass questioning would not only be valuable as a check on their effectiveness, but also as an aid to comprehending the true nature of the led, so that their always-threatening fear of schoolmasters would be eliminated and a fruitful relationship fostered between the leaders and the led.

Noelle then went on to contrast the role played by public opinion in America and in Germany. "In the great 'democracy' on the other side of the ocean," she wrote, "it [public opinion] has the function of a corporation whose millions of stockholders dictate the policy of the enterprise." In National Socialist Germany, on the other hand,

> it seems to us rather as the body of the people [*Volkskoerper*], which receives its orders from the head and guarantees their accomplishment, so that through the working together of head and limbs, transcendent political and cultural values can be achieved. In one case public opinion rules; in the other it is led.

The 1940 volume that harbored these sophisticated thoughts has mysteriously disappeared from West German libraries, although it heads the list of the author's previous writings cited in the U.S. edition of *The Spiral of Silence*. This recent book cited the work of Walter Lippmann, but the designation "Jew" does not follow the mention of Lippmann's name as it does in her earlier work. Nor does the present volume contain sentiments like the following:

> Since 1933, the Jews, who have monopolized a large part of America's intellectual life, have concentrated their demagogic capacities on anti-German agitation. . . . The treatment of the Jews in Germany is portrayed by the American press in a completely distorted manner.

The author had acquired her knowledge of the American scene as an exchange student in the U.S. in the years 1937-39. German exchange students at this time were selected under the rules of the National Socialist party Office for Foreign Politics, and the program was an important part of the propaganda apparatus. Noelle was picked on the basis of her superb credentials as an activist and leader of series of a Nazi youth and student organizations.* Of the many

* Richard Albrecht, a German journalist, has recently uncovered a list of these affiliations and also led me to the article in *Das Reich* discussed on p. 49.

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young people who came to the United States under this program, she was singled out for special mention in an American wartime study of the program's operations.

Noelle has explained away her early Nazi utterances and connections as a necessary expedient required to win her coveted trip abroad; she once pointed out that "I never knew Goebbels personally." But her activities as a propagandist for Nazism continued for years after this initial student phase.

Returning to Germany from the U.S. via Japan and the Siberian railroad, Noelle embarked on a career as a journalist. She found employment with *Das Reich*, a slick weekly newspaper for which Goebbels personally wrote editorials. Aimed at intellectuals, the journal carried articles on music, theater, and such cultural items as the "German baroque" cupolas of churches in parts of Poland that had already been incorporated into the Third Reich.

On June 8, 1941 (two weeks before the invasion of the Soviet Union), *Das Reich* carried a two-page spread under the heading, "Who Informs America?," in which Noelle drew on her observations of this country. The sources of American public opinion—the press, radio, and movie newsreels—were, she wrote, in the hands of individuals obsessed with hatred of Germany. Leading the pro-Allied interventionist pack were such columnists as Dorothy Thompson and General Hugh Johnson ("a friend of the Jew Bernard Baruch"). There were a few noble exceptions, like Westbrook Pegler ("a son of the Middle West with Mark Twainlike features")—though it was nowhere indicated that his column was distributed by what Noelle referred to elsewhere as "the Jew-loving Scripps-Howard concern."

Illustrating the article was a cartoon from the Chicago *Daily News*, about which Noelle had this to say: In gruesome distortion, symbols of National Socialism and signs of death are bound together. To grasp suddenly in the dark for the Jew who must be hiding himself behind the Chicago *Daily News* means sticking one's hand into a wasp's nest. When one gets forty stings at the same time, one stops being interested in a single wasp. Jews write in the newspapers, own them, have virtually monopolized the advertising agencies and can therefore open or shut the gates of advertising income to individual newspapers as they wish. They control the film industry, own the biggest radio stations and all the theaters.

There is no need to trace the thread that connects these words to the broken shop windows and burning synagogues of *Kristallnacht*—already two years in the past when the words were written—or to the millions of individual acts of sadism and murder that made up the Nazi war against the Jews.

Soon after the war, Noelle surfaced in Freiburg, where she worked for French military intelligence. The U.S. Counter-Intelligence Corps became interested in her when she claimed to be working for American agents in Wiesbaden, and found, when they arrested her, that she had purloined British intelligence documents, marked *Secret*, in her purse. In 1949, after establishing her research institute, she released a report that observed, "The greatest objection that is expressed against National Socialism puts the accent on the handling of the Jewish Question." Of late, Noelle has been conducting polls asking Germans whether the Jews have "too much influence in this country," too little, or the right amount.

On her frequent return visits to the United States in the decades since the war, Noelle seems to have gone out of her way to cultivate the acquaintance and professional collaboration of distinguished Jewish colleagues. Most of them have been vaguely aware of her Nazi past, but willing to overlook it.

Clearly, at this point in her career, Noelle is well beyond the possibility of destruction. Her record is surely no worse than that of millions of other Germans and Austrians who were caught up in the fever of the Hitler period and want nothing more than for the past to be forgotten. But Noelle is, after all, writing precisely about the phenomenon that she personally experienced and witnessed. In *The Spiral of Silence*, she refers to the studies of the late Stanley Milgram, who tested the limits to which people would go in inflicting (simulated) pain in response to the instructions of an experimenter. Milgram replicated some of his original work in France and Norway, and Noelle suggests that he "transferred his experiments to Europe because the suspicion had arisen that conforming behavior such as Solomon Asch had established was perhaps an American peculiarity." This is a remarkable statement, since Milgram's research was prompted by a zeal to understand how vast numbers of ordinary Germans were driven to participate in the crimes of the Nazi regime.

Long before the appearance in 1950 of *The God That Failed*, ex-Communists were freely acknowledging their former sins and analyzing the psychological processes that brought them about. Even the Nazi war criminal Albert Speer, reflecting in prison, tried to explain his motives for thinking and behaving as he had done. Should one expect anything less from a professor of communication at a major university (Mainz) and a visiting professor at the University of Chicago?

Noelle's latest book, like her first, is more of a footnote to the history of Nazism than to the study of public opinion. To express one's thoughts and feelings requires honesty and sometimes courage. To repress them and to deny the truth is to fall into a spiral of silence, though not the one she describes.

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Spike Lee Fever

Richard Grenier

In sharp contrast to the hyperventilated reception that has greeted Spike Lee's new movie *Jungle Fever* in the *bien-pensant* national press—*Newsweek*, which devoted a cover story to it, said that *Jungle Fever* raises "more crucial issues than any American film in a very long time"—the American blacks I have questioned confess privately that they hate it. One admitted to me that he felt obliged to see all Lee's movies but absolutely loathed this one; on the other hand, he added, he loathes Woody Allen's movies, too. A number of other blacks who happened to be in the room pointed out that Woody Allen, for all his professed universalism, has never had a single black in his films.

Is Spike Lee the black Woody Allen? Both men are physically small and less than irresistibly handsome. Both act in their own movies—Spike Lee far more adamantly than Woody Allen. Woody Allen is preoccupied with Jewish-Gentile relations; almost invariably in his movies, the character played by Allen has Gentile mistresses. Spike Lee is preoccupied, not to say obsessed, with black-white relations; in his new film, his black protagonist has a white mistress.

But Spike Lee's ethnic self-presentation differs dramatically from Woody Allen's. Woody Allen's approach to the Gentile world is ingratiating self-mockery. Lee's to the white world is ominous threats and bullying, coupled with an assumption that whites feel a limitless and nearly insurmountable hatred toward blacks.

Allen's technique for handling Gentiles is subtle and optimistic. It assumes, in fact, that by making Gentiles laugh, Woody Allen can outwit them. Spike Lee's assumptions are far more hostile, and if he ever calls for laughter it is of an entirely different sort. His goal, also, seems different. Where Woody Allen plainly wants Jews to be accepted without prejudice in the larger community, Spike Lee, throughout his entire career, has been at best ambivalent on this score. At least half the time he seems to be arguing angrily for separatism, as in *School Daze*, where he ridicules "wannabees," black college students who act as if they "want to be" white.

Some black friends of mine in Washington, D.C., drove to white, upper-middle-class Bethesda, Maryland, to see *Jungle Fever* during its opening weekend; they found the house far from full. The same night, I made a point of seeing the movie at Washington's Union Station, which draws a preponderantly black audience, though, unlike the audiences of New York's Times Square, one that is clearly middle-class. The early evening show at Union Station was sold out. For the ten o'clock show, which I attended, the house was full again, with only 7 whites and over 350 blacks. The reactions of the black audience were not only different from those of the largely white audience at Bethesda (as I later ascertained from my friends), at several points they did not even match the ones the movie seems to call for.

In the opening scene of *Jungle Fever*, Flipper Purify (Wesley Snipes), a successful black architect and Harlem resident, is making love to his wife, Drew (Lonette McKee). She accompanies her lovemaking with loud cries and moans which are overheard by their adorable little daughter, and the "noises" made by Mummy subsequently become the subject of adorable breakfast conversation. "Were you hurting Mummy, Daddy?" asks the daughter, and later, when it becomes clear the little tyke knows all about sex, "Were you doing it to make a baby or just for the fun of it?" For what it is worth, the black audience at Union Station, in which women were heavily represented, giggled during the whole opening scene of lovemaking, which was shot quite seriously.

Few lines of dialogue in this film are not concerned with either sex, race, or skin color. The black architect's skin is dark. His wife, technically "black," has very fair skin. This comes in for endless discussion. Skin color—not only black and white but different shades of black—is important in *Jungle Fever*, important to the point of obsession.

The point is brought home as our hero Flipper now goes off to work at an architectural office which is run by whites but where he is the star professional. There he is confronted with a racial problem. At least he considers it a racial problem. His former secretary, now departed, was a "sister," which is to say black, and the management of the firm has provided him with a temporary replacement who is white. Flipper protests vociferously. Perhaps he is struggling to increase or at least maintain the number of blacks employed by the firm, but if so he never mentions it; what he actually says sounds as if he simply does not like working with white people. But he fully expects to be promoted to the rank of partner by his superiors, and in a later scene he very aggressively demands that promotion. When he is refused, he resigns.

The resignation, which occurs in the first half of the film, is the last

Richard Grenier, *whose "Indian Love Call" appeared in our March issue, is a columnist for the Washington* Times *and the author of, most recently,* Capturing the Culture: Film, Art, and Politics.

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the audience hears of architecture or, indeed, of Flipper's earning a living, a subject which seems to be beyond Spike Lee's sphere of interest. The promotion-refusal scene is very crudely written, with Flipper proud and defiant and his white employers rigidly hostile; it can only have been introduced to prove that the black man will never get justice from whitey. The black audience at Union Station, accepting the movie's portrayal of inflexible racial discrimination at least in the context of the movie, cheered Flipper on as if rooting for the home team at a basketball game.

Before his promotion bid and resignation, however, Flipper is faced with a different kind of racial problem. What is a successful, dark-skinned, black professional to do when stuck with a pretty, white, Italian-American "temp" from Bensonhurst, Brooklyn? (The film is dedicated to Yusuf Hawkins, the black teenager shot to death by a gang of white youths in Bensonhurst in 1989.) The answer, plainly, is to have sexual relations with her. And Angie (Annabella Sciorra), although she already has a nice Italian-American boyfriend, is more than willing. Flipper fornicates with her right on his desk. The audience at Union Station, particularly the women, again giggled without interruption during the whole desktop sexual encounter. Somewhat to my surprise, the audience found all the sex scenes funny.

So HERE is our black architect Flipper involved in an adulterous relationship with his white temp, a liaison viewed with vehement ill will by both of the communities from which they respectively come. When Angie drops her Italian-American boyfriend and her family learns she is consorting with a black, her father, enraged, beats her mercilessly. At Sylvia's, a famous soul-food restaurant in Harlem, a black waitress with wild improbability refuses to serve Flipper and openly insults him for being with a white woman. Flipper, meanwhile, has confided in his best friend (played by Spike Lee himself), who tells his own wife about the affair. His wife promptly informs Flipper's wife Drew, who in

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a paroxysm of rage and grief kicks Flipper out of their home, throwing all his belongings into the street. What wounds her to the heart, she cries tearfully, is that Flipper has betrayed her with a white woman.

Flipper's father, a retired but very strict minister of the gospel (Ossie Davis), having invited Flipper and his white girlfriend to dinner, also insults them and drives them out of his home, calling his son a "whoremonger." Flipper's best friend, the Spike Lee character, shows no special remorse for having provoked all this commotion by violating his friend's confidence. Flipper, one can only assume, has done the wrong thing.

THE high point of the movie, as far as the Union Station audience was concerned, is the "war council" held by Drew and a group of her friends to discuss Flipper's adultery and the question of sex between the races as well as men generally. This is about the only place in the film where one encounters a variety of opinions. Some of the women, for different reasons, are more tolerant of Flipper's behavior than others. Well-dressed and economically middle-class, these women talk the way I'm told middle-class black women very seldom talk, like streetwalkers (actually, like Spike Lee). One of the women, fair like Drew, condones interracial dating with Asians and whites, "providing they like me for myself." Another woman, who produced an absolute roar of approval from the female contingent at Union Station, declares emphatically that in sexual matters, color apart, "All men are dogs!" Another roar was produced by a woman who elaborates cynically on the same thesis: "When a man see pussy starin' him in the face . . . he gone fuck it." These roars of agreement from the audience—half-jocular, indulgent—were plainly expressive of an attitude toward men: not whites, not blacks, but men.

Jungle Fever contains a subsidiary boy-girl interracial relationship. Paulie, Angie's abandoned Bensonhurst boyfriend, to console himself for the departed Angie, develops a romantic interest in a local black woman, Orin. Played by the same John Turturro who works in his father's pizza parlor in Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, Paulie runs a humble little candy store in which uncouth, black-hating Italian American proletarians sit around reading the tabloid New York *Post*. Orin dresses well, reads the New York *Times*. Rather like a society lady doing charity work, she encourages Paulie to enroll in college. She seeks to raise him to a higher cultural sphere than the deplorable Italian-American milieu in which he is tragically mired.

The Paulie-Orin relationship is perhaps supposed to prove that Spike Lee is not categorically opposed to sexual encounters between the two races, provided whitey knows his place. But what is whitey's place? In the two relationships Lee shows us, the black is the clear social and educational superior of the white—a situation, let us say, which is not the universal rule in American life. The white is the humble supplicant, pitiably eager, the black the condescending partner. And even then, after all, it may not work out. We do not see the progress or end of the Paulie-Orin relationship, but we do see Flipper's adieu to Angie. He tells her rather coldly that he had just wanted to see "what white girls were like." Flipper, like his best friend, shows virtually no remorse over his unfeeling behavior, having done at last, I suppose, the right thing.

But Spike Lee would not want you to think he is interested only in sex, or even only in race and sex. He is also interested in race and drugs. Flipper's older brother Gator (in a brilliant performance by Samuel Jackson) is a hopeless cocaine addict who is finally shot dead by his father. The shooting helps the plot limp along because the estranged Drew evidently comes to feel sorry for her errant husband, and in the closing scenes we see a half-reconciled Flipper and Drew at it again, Drew moaning and their adorable daughter laughing at the noises Mummy makes.

But there is still another scene to go before the movie ends. Leaving the house, Flipper encounters a black street prostitute who cries out: "I'll suck your big black dick for two dollars!" With a cry of anguish at this revelation of the tragedy of the black condition, Flipper clasps her to his bosom. The camera pulls away, still fixed on Flipper on a Harlem street corner, embracing his poor soul sister and shouting "No!" to the heavens. Their dramatic embrace is the last frame of the movie.

Jungle Fever is dross, and turgid dross. The only justification I can think of for writing about it is the enormous social importance that has been attributed to it.

Spike Lee, who owes something of his initial launching to the Best New Director's Award he won at the Cannes film festival in 1986 with his first movie, *She's Gotta Have It*, stormed out of the most recent Cannes festival with charges of racism when *Jungle Fever* failed to win the Golden Palm. Earlier, he had charged Hollywood's Motion Picture Academy with racism when *Do the Right Thing* failed to receive an Academy Award nomination for best picture, and had also charged the Cannes Festival jury with racism when *Do the Right Thing* failed to win the Golden Palm. After this year's festival, Lee swore angrily never to return to Cannes.

But Spike Lee's anger at the white world is ill-founded. He benefited from considerable favoritism in winning his first Cannes prize, and his talent is so negligible that if he were not black I suspect he might never have found the financing to make a single movie in America. Spike Lee, in fact, is a product of Hollywood's real if unofficial affirmative-action program.

In the early 1970's, Hollywood made a series of what were at the time called "black-exploitation" movies, the best-remembered of which are Gordon Parks's *Shaft*, Gordon Parks, Jr.'s *Super Fly*, and Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*. These films, for the first time in movie history, were principally about black people, with black heroes, and found a large commercial au-

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dience, mainly black. But once the initial rush of enthusiasm in the black community evaporated, Hollywood concluded that the market was too narrow to sustain black movies and it abandoned them. In these "black-exploitation" movies, white characters, although necessarily in supporting roles and sometimes foolish, were usually well-disposed toward blacks, even sympathetic. There was no black-white antagonism.

Then, in the mid-1980's, with Spike Lee as standard bearer, a second wave of black movies—this time generally about black grievances or at least black problems—began appearing, and Hollywood will soon have more black movies in release than ever: *New Jack City, Boyz N the Hood, Straight Out of Brooklyn, A Rage in Harlem, To Sleep With Anger, Hangin' With the Homeboys, The Five Heart Beats, True Identity,* and *Livin' Large!*. In a period when the production cost of the average Hollywood movie is $20 million, these new black films are normally budgeted at half this or less. Many of their directors are very young, twenty-four, nineteen, an age when few white moviemakers get to direct. But it remains to be seen, when the studio accountants have totted up their figures, how much staying power this second wave of black movies will have compared to the first wave two decades ago.

Ideologically these films are a mixed bag, but of all the new black filmmakers it is Spike Lee, the most stridently anti-white, who is beyond question the media's favorite, the critics' darling. In addition to the *Newsweek* cover story, *Jungle Fever* has earned Spike Lee a four-page "inside cover" in *Time* (along with other new black directors), a cover story in the Washington *Post* magazine, a major interview in *Playboy,* and saturation coverage in both the printed press and broadcast media. Vincent Canby of the New York *Times* (who, incidentally, had much to do with establishing Woody Allen's inflated reputation) wrote that *Jungle Fever* is "visually splendid," "harrowing and wondrously alive," and that Spike Lee has "an astonishing command of his craft," joining the ranks of "our best." The *Wall Street Journal* called the film "one of those miracle movies where reality and dreams merge into haunting clarity." Throughout the country, the film has been praised ardently by critics apparently under the impression they are striking a brave blow against racism. The Boston *Herald* called the movie a "magnificent achievement." The Miami *Herald* called it "uplifting" and "deeply satisfying." The Detroit *News* said Spike Lee has "earned his place among the masters." The white power structure, it would appear, has not done too badly by Spike Lee.

We are confronted with an unattractive situation. Cheered on by film critics and other journalists, Spike Lee in *Jungle Fever* presents the white and black communities in America as irreconcilably hostile. In this respect it is interesting to compare *Jungle Fever* with Mario Van Peebles's *New Jack City,* which has already outgrossed (in the Hollywood sense of the word) any film ever made by Spike Lee. *Do the Right Thing,* which to date has been Lee's triumph, ended up 45th in box-office receipts for the year 1989; the following year his *Mo' Better Blues,* finished an ignominious 72nd.

The scene of *New Jack City* is Harlem. We meet Nino Brown (Wesley Snipes again), a kind of black Al Capone, who in imperial style sets out to capture the New York drug cartel from the Mafia. In this movie, almost all the police officers are black, the state prosecutors are black, and most of the criminals and drug addicts we see are black. The outraged and victimized citizenry is also black. On the way out of the courthouse, where he has received an incredibly light sentence after being brought to trial (interestingly, his defense attorney is the whitest white man in New York), Nino Brown is shot dead by an outraged black citizen in what is plainly intended to be seen as justifiable homicide.

In other words, *New Jack City* is deep in Clint-Eastwood-*Dirty-Harry* country, with an added dimension: it is a cry from the black community for harsher punishment for the black criminals who are corroding black society. The outraged black citizen who guns down Nino Brown cries out: "You're committing genocide on your own people!" As for black-white relations within the New York police force, two officers, one black, one white, start out disliking each other but end up saving each other's lives, solid buddies. Crack, one says to the other, "isn't a black thing, and it isn't a white thing. It's a death thing."

New Jack City is not a very good movie, but that is probably not the reason it failed to awaken much enthusiasm among white film critics.

Spike Lee claims he has "deep respect" for Martin Luther King, Jr., but confesses he cannot "get with" King's policy of nonviolence and has always been "drawn more" to the doctrines of black nationalist Malcolm X. Lee is given to wearing a baseball cap emblazoned with an "X" and, indeed, his next film is scheduled to be about Malcolm X, whose doctrine for blacks, says Lee, amounts to "protecting the self." Presumably the rioting black mob in *Do the Right Thing* that burns down the pizza parlor of a quite innocent white man is "protecting the self." As for blacks who dissent from his position, Spike Lee recommends that Michael L. Williams, for instance, an Assistant Secretary of Education in the Bush administration whom he regards as an "Uncle Tom handkerchief-head Negro," should be "beat with a Louisville Slugger in an alley."

At the time of *Do the Right Thing* I wrote that although at the end of that film Spike Lee pretended to present as equally valid the precepts of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, the movie and Spike Lee himself were quite evidently leaning toward Malcolm X. Very few people and no film critics I know of saw it that way. Now Spike Lee is shouting it from the rooftops.

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Books in Review

Global Mission

EXPORTING DEMOCRACY: FULFILLING AMERICA'S DESTINY. By JOSHUA MURAVCHIK. *American Enterprise Institute. 259 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT KAGAN

FIVE years ago, a book like Joshua Muravchik's powerful and well-argued call for an ambitious American foreign policy based on democratic internationalism would have aroused little controversy. This was, after all, the official policy of the Reagan administration. Most conservatives endorsed it, and liberals attacked only its application, not its premises. Today, Muravchik's view is no longer in the majority, perhaps least of all among conservatives. With the fall of the Soviet Union, many conservatives have reverted to skepticism—some call it realism—about the prospects for democracy abroad, the capacity of American power to foster it, and the interest the United States has in sacrificing blood and treasure on its behalf.

One of the great virtues of Muravchik's book is to engage these skeptics directly, noting both the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. In one chapter, he wrestles with the long-held realist view that American democracy is not "exportable." Acknowledging that exact replicas of the American system may not be suitable for other cultures, he notes nevertheless that in nations as diverse as Japan, India, and Costa Rica, democracies have taken root, each in its own way. To those who say that Japanese or Indian democracy is not democracy as we know it, Muravchik responds that

> what the Japanese have, not surprisingly, is Japan-style democracy rather than U.S.-style democracy. This is exactly what they ought to have. Its personalistic factions and emphasis on loyalty and hierarchy reflect Japanese culture. These features may seem repugnant to us. But the system retains the special features of democracy; namely, the main government officials are chosen in honest, open, competitive elections and the citizens enjoy the right to hear and take part in unfettered political discourse.

Finally, to those who say that India and Japan are special cases, their democracy imposed by American and British occupations, Muravchik cites Freedom House's list of other free countries—39 of them—that lie outside North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

In another set of chapters Muravchik addresses persistent doubts about America's capacity to promote democracy abroad. His historical journey through the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries shows what any American schoolboy once knew: whether through force of example, force of arms, or a myriad of means in between, the United States has succeeded more often than it has failed in its attempts to support or encourage democracy abroad.

But the major argument between Muravchik and the new "realists" is not over whether America can, in fact, foster democratic progress abroad, but whether it should. What troubles many American foreign-policy analysts—and especially many conservatives—about calls to global engagement on behalf of democracy is not the part about democracy but the part about engagement. Only the growing trend among leading American conservative thinkers toward retrenchment and even isolationism can explain why they, of all people, should find Muravchik's prescription exceptionable at precisely the moment of American democracy's greatest triumph.

AT THE end of 1989, Charles Krauthammer predicted that the "Left-Right debate of today will gradually transform itself into the isolationist-internationalist debate of yesterday." Despite the wholly unanticipated eruption of the Gulf War, that prediction has been fully vindicated. While the vast majority of Americans savor their military triumph, those who make their livings debating the purpose of American power continue the angry battle they began before the war, when the collapse of the Soviet Union opened up seemingly endless possibilities for the use, abuse, and non-use of America's singular strength. Among conservatives the debate is especially strident because old alliances have broken down and old agreements are being discarded.

It seems evident in retrospect that many of these old conservative alliances were tactical, not strategic. During the Carter and Reagan presidencies, varied strands of American conservatism, from the Republicans of the Taft-Goldwater era to the apostate Democrats known as neoconservatives, joined in common cause to save the United States from what all agreed was a failure of will and national purpose in the face of the Soviet geopolitical and ideological threat. Thus, a once and future isolationist like Patrick J. Buchanan, in his role as director of communications in the Reagan White House, enthusiastically oversaw the writing of countless presidential speeches about America's global mission to support people struggling for freedom anywhere and everwhere, from Grenada to Cambodia, against right- and left-wing dictatorships alike. Thus, too, Jeane Kirkpatrick, who had earlier questioned the wisdom of imposing American values on traditional dictatorships allied to us, by the end

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ROBERT KAGAN *is currently working on a book about U.S. policy in Nicaragua, which will be published next year by Poseidon Press.*

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of 1982 was telling the United Nations (where she served as U.S. ambassador) that "the preservation of international peace . . . [and] the preservation of human rights and freedom . . . are inexorably linked." And thus, finally, the neoconservative Irving Kristol contended in the fall of 1985 that because the U.S.-Soviet conflict was ideological, "any viable conception of the United States's 'national interest' cannot help but be organically related to that public philosophy—ideology, if you wish—which is the basis of what we have to come to call 'the American way of life.'"

TODAY, the tactical alliance in favor of democratic internationalism—an alliance formed in order to rally Americans in the fight against Communism, to overcome the isolationist tendencies within American society, and to rebut the charges of the American Left that American power would always be used to promote wicked ends—has broken down. Owen Harries, a consistent realist who is the editor of the *National Interest*, opposes democratic internationalism in large measure because it would seem to extend American commitments beyond what he deems appropriate and sustainable. Jeane Kirkpatrick, while still declaring it "enormously desirable for the U.S. . . . to encourage democratic institutions wherever possible," now wants to limit American efforts to making "clear our views about the consequences of freedom and unfreedom" and "encourage[ing] others to adopt democratic practices" presumably through friendly advice rather than through the exercise of economic, political, or military power. As for Patrick Buchanan, he has hot-bloodedly attacked not just the "democratists" but the whole "internationalist set, never at a loss to divert U.S. wealth and power into crusades and causes having little or nothing to do with the true national interest of the United States."

If Buchanan is at all representative of a trend, the burden on "democratists" has grown; they must show not only that America should involve itself in the world on behalf of democracy, but that it should involve itself at all. This is what Muravchik attempts to do, and he performs the task as well as anyone can. He reminds us of America's disastrous retreat to isolationism in this century, and he points out what a bizarre kind of "realism" it is to assume that, with the Soviet Union in disarray, no threats lie over the horizon that would require the United States to return to the fray:

> In the wake of Communism, we are unlikely to see forces more terrible and more destructive, but we would be foolish to assume that all troubles will cease or to risk turning our back on the world. That we cannot foresee the shape of any possible new threat does not mean that none exists; it may show only the limits of our imagination.

Muravchik might have pursued this theme further, for the unknown threat he rightly expects would most probably arise as a direct *consequence* of American withdrawal. What many "realists" seem to ignore is that American power in all its forms is also the keystone of power structures in many different regions of the world. In East and Southeast Asia, in the Middle East, in Latin America, in Western and now increasingly Eastern Europe, in large parts of Africa, the mere existence of American power affects the decisions and attitudes of leaders and would-be leaders every day. Withdraw American power from these systems, and personal and national ambitions, now tempered, and perhaps not yet even felt, will inevitably blossom. New horizons will open for men who never dreamed of them.

Is this not after all the lesson of Saddam Hussein's unanticipated adventurism? The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war created an opportunity, and he seized it. He believed, with reason, that Americans would not care. Though in the event they sur-

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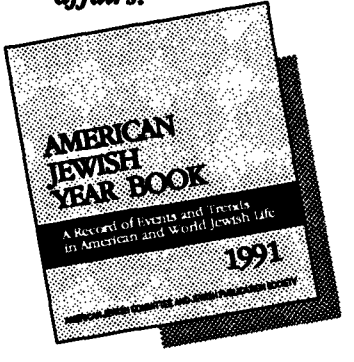

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prised both him and themselves, who is to say that the next Saddam Hussein will not succeed?

THE United States must, then, remain involved overseas. But as the experience of the cold war proved, we cannot sustain such a consistent involvement without a justification that goes beyond realism and appeals to the deeply rooted moral principles Americans share. No one would claim, and Muravchik certainly does not, that the United States must engage in a feverish and uncompromising democratic crusade in every country in the world at all times, regardless of the cost or risk or likelihood of success. This is the Wilsonian caricature that realists love to assail, but it is not what democratic internationalists recommend or what America, even when most seized by the crusading spirit, has done. What America can practice is the *prudent* support of democracy, using all the many tools at its disposal, most of them well short of military force. Muravchik carefully lists these tools, describing their strengths and weaknesses, and the appropriate times and places for their use.

America can also practice the *patient* support of democracy—not forcing change when change is impossible, but waiting for conditions to ripen, nurturing promising developments, discouraging those which threaten what little hope for progress may exist. Muravchik examines important moments in the histories of several countries, including Nicaragua in 1978-79, El Salvador in the early 1980's, and the Philippines in 1986, to show how relatively subtle American actions at the appropriate moment can make the difference between the success and failure of democracy.

To say that democracy should be the polestar of American foreign policy is not to remove our responsibility to navigate carefully through the hazards history lays in the path of all nations. "We cannot foresee the exact form of the new global politics or new problems in other directions," Muravchik writes. Yet rather than withdraw into ourselves in the face of uncertainty,

> we ought to press ahead with what has brought us success—the advancement of the democratic idea. . . . [W]e ought never forget the general rule that the more democratic the world becomes, the more likely it is to be both peaceful and friendly to America.

Such a prescription seems, above all, realistic.

Bridges and Gates

LIVING TOGETHER SEPARATELY: ARABS AND JEWS IN CONTEMPORARY JERUSALEM. By MICHAEL ROMANN and ALEX WEINGROD. *Princeton University Press. 258 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL PIPES

IN *Jerusalem: City of Mirrors*, Amos Elon observes that Jerusalem "has never been 'one' or 'united,' never a 'mosaic,' as its well-wishers hoped, but a collection of alienated islands" of Jews, Muslim Arabs, Circassians, Armenians, and others. Michael Romann and Alex Weingrod, two other long-time residents of the holy city, argue in this fascinating book that nowadays there are just two islands: Arab and Jewish. The many other ways to categorize Jerusalem's population (for example, Muslim and Christian Arab, pious and secular Jews) pale in significance. The authors count no fewer than four lines—language, religion, national affiliation, ethnic-group membership—dividing Arabs and Jews. Add to this brew a clash of aspirations, and the result is a "tight, almost impermeable" ethnic boundary.

And they do mean impermeable. There are Jewish blood banks and Arab ones, Jewish and Arab electricity companies, Jewish and Arab brands of cigarettes, and two kinds of telephone books. Likewise, hotels, movie houses, schools, and buses all come in two forms, as do social services and most government offices.

The ethnicity of a product or institution can be defined in many ways. The identity of a store is established by its location (Arabs do not buy land or open businesses in the Jewish areas, and vice versa), the provenance of its goods, the alphabet of its signs, the religion and languages of its proprietor, its days of rest. There is no room for ambiguity. Segregation prevails even at the few institutions used by both groups. Take the Hadassah Medical Center: when heart-transplant operations began in 1987, the hospital's director reportedly assured the public that Jewish hearts would not be placed in Arab bodies, or the reverse.

THEN there is the double-minority syndrome. Arabs feel embattled in the Jewish state and suspect Israel of seeking sovereignty and exclusive possession; *sumud* (steadfastness) is their ideology. Jews, surrounded by an often hostile world and by twenty very hostile Arab countries, are determined to establish control over the most sacred city; creating facts is the Israeli response. Not surprisingly, tensions bubble just below the surface of Arab-Jewish relations. Individuals get along when on best behavior, quashing political instincts and views. In the memorable words of an Arab furniture upholsterer: "Anyone who wants to get along here must be deaf, blind, and dumb; otherwise he'll never make it."

The upholsterer's sentiments derive from his work for Jewish customers; and, indeed, workplaces are the "most active arenas of ethnic social interaction." Economic roles have their own peculiarities. When Arabs and Jews work side by side, they adopt an approach to each other that Romann and Weingrod sum up as, "we came here to work, not to talk politics." The authors note that Jewish workers are willing to serve under Arab bosses, but only if the ultimate control of an institution (company, government office) is in Jewish hands; in other words, Jews are willing to work "*for* Arabs, but not *under* Arabs." Then there is the question of pay:

DANIEL PIPES, *director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, recently published* The Rushdie Affair *(Birch Lane Press) and* Greater Syria *(Oxford University Press).*

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if Arab laborers demand higher wages to work in the Jewish part of town, Jewish employers demand that Arab laborers accept lower wages. Standards of living are so far apart that both sides can get what they want: Arabs earn about 40 percent more in West Jerusalem than they would in East Jerusalem, while Jewish workers receive about that much more again.

THE strength of *Living Together Separately* lies in the authors' immersion in their subject, the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their reporting, and the range of topics they cover. Dealing with sensitive, even explosive, issues, they employ restrained language and display political sensitivity.

Still, the book has defects. On occasion, it sinks into mild Palestinian propaganda. One example: before 1967, we read, "the local Palestinian residents [in Jerusalem] were opposed to Jordanian rule." The reality was far less categorical, with King Hussein of Jordan enjoying important support in the city.

More serious is the study's dated quality. The authors admit that they finished a draft of the book in 1987; here and there, evidence seeps through suggesting it was the final draft. Since they see the *intifada*, which began in that year, as fundamentally altering Arab-Jewish communal relations (as a result of it, they write, "peaceful coexistence and *sumud* were replaced by direct action, violent confrontation, and greater uncertainty"), this is a damaging lapse. Many of the patterns explained in detail turn out to be defunct. Admittedly, book publishing is a slow business, but the authors and their editors were decidedly remiss in letting *Living Together Separately* appear with this fundamental flaw. At the least, they should have presented the book as a historical inquiry covering the years 1967 to 1987.

But the most serious problem is the study's lack of context. Romann and Weingrod give the impression that the Jewish-Arab relationship in Jerusalem is a sport, something apart. They emphasize the uniqueness of post-1967 Jerusalem, pointing to "the multidimensional and nearly total scope of Jewish-Arab segregation." In one passage, they call Jerusalem an "extreme instance of polarization."

They are right, but not entirely. Jerusalem is not a freak phenomenon but an extension of the characteristic geographic and social segregation found throughout Israel. Arabs live in Jaffa and Jews in Tel Aviv; the former inhabit the ancient town of (lower) Nazareth, the latter inhabit Upper Nazareth. Where the two peoples do live more closely together (as in Haifa and Akko), they still live apart. Nor is this a recent development. Residential segregation has been in place from the time of the first modern Jewish immigration to Palestine in the mid-19th century, for Labor Zionist ideologues intent on creating a Jewish proletariat avoided Arab laborers, and Arabs had no use for Jews of any sort. By mutual accord, the Jews did not move into existing residential areas but established new settlements.

In turn, this pattern fits into something larger, an approach that extends throughout the Middle East and much of the Muslim world. Villages are invariably inhabited by a single ethnic group and towns are divided into quarters. From Morocco to Indonesia, Muslims and non-Muslims live apart. Further, the pattern of economic interaction and residential segregation (open bridges and closed gates, as it is sometimes known) is found throughout the Middle East, especially in areas subjected to the Ottoman millet system (in which sectarian communities had considerable administrative autonomy). Jerusalem may look odd from a Western perspective, especially when compared with such ethnically divided cities as Brussels, Belfast, or Montreal; but it looks perfectly normal when seen in the context of Beirut, Aleppo, or Tabriz.

The root cause for this persistent segregation has to do with the tenets of Islam. Briefly, while Islam permits most non-Muslims under Muslim rule to practice their faith in peace, it also discourages interaction between Muslims and the adherents of other faiths. This fosters the separate residential patterns that Romann and Weingrod so capably describe for Jerusalem; it also accounts for the special cast of communal relations in such disparate places as northern Nigeria and Kashmir.

LIVING together separately has several political implications. One has to do with the overriding importance of politics. Rather naively, the Israeli victors in 1967 thought that improving the quality of life for East Jerusalem Arabs would change their political aspirations. But in Jerusalem political passions generally determine economic behavior, not the other way around. (This lesson also applies to most other confrontations in the Middle East.)

Another implication has to do with the limits of Arab-Jewish coexistence. Patterns found in Jerusalem render unlikely the possibility of any quick path to mutual understanding and friendship, because they show that time has not brought the two peoples together, improved their relations, or inspired mutual toleration. Quite the contrary, as the *intifada* suggests, mutual exposure has deepened animosities. Accordingly, plans for a bi-national or "secular democratic" state are unrealistic.

Still, all is not bleak. If Arabs and Jews are not coming together, they stay far enough apart that they can for the most part ignore each other. However ugly the *intifada*, it is based on an argument over abstract issues of sovereignty, not over matters of everyday life. To a surprising extent, Arabs and Jews can and do live side by side. Knifings at bus stops are a recent exception; for most residents of Jerusalem, avoidance and indifference characterize relations more than does active hostility.

These are alien perspectives for Westerners, especially Americans. We take pride in the way Cubans and Vietnamese melt in our pot. But Middle Easterners revel in exclusion; their approach may seem deficient both morally and politically, but it is a proven way to deal with the age-old Middle Eastern problem of keeping tolerable rela-

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tions between antagonistic populations. In Jerusalem and other cities, spatial segregation is mutually voluntary for the very good reason that it works. Given the ethnic-based rage and violence in the Middle East, "tight, almost impermeable" segregation is probably about as good as it gets.

For the Record

THE LONG PRETENSE: SOVIET TREATY DIPLOMACY FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV. By ARNOLD BEICHMAN. *Transaction. 271 pp. $32.95.*

Reviewed by MIDGE DECTER

WINSTON CHURCHILL famously pronounced World War II an unnecessary war. By the same reasoning, Arnold Beichman's *The Long Pretense: Soviet Treaty Diplomacy from Lenin to Gorbachev*—an account of Soviet diplomatic deceptions roughly from the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1922 to the present day—ought to be an unnecessary book. Alas, because of a seemingly ineradicable human propensity to hide from unpleasant truths, the war had to be fought and the book has had to be written. And as it is to this day depressing to think that Western statesmen permitted the monstrous and yet still relatively weak Hitler to march unopposed into the Rhineland, so it is utterly astonishing to realize that after the Soviets' 70-year record of despotic cruelty, mendacity, and murder, there are still so-called men of good will (perhaps more of them than ever) in need of the kind of instruction Arnold Beichman of the Hoover Institution provides here. Of those statesmen in the 1930's it can at least be said that they had been deceiving themselves about Hitler for only a short time; with regard to the Soviets, some extremely important Americans have been at it off and on for more than half a century.

Beichman's book is not, as its title and subtitle might suggest, a straightforward historical record of Soviet treaty violations. Actually, it focuses almost as insistently on Washington as on Moscow, its subject being not so much treaties as something Beichman has dubbed "treatyism." By treatyism he means an absolute and continuing belief, unaffected by any form of Soviet behavior, that "treaties on any and all subjects between the United States and the Soviet Union are inherently a good thing." An added recent component of this belief—according to Beichman one of its current major underpinnings—is the hallucinatory conviction that the United States has no right to respond in any way to any Soviet infraction because of its own surpassing unworthiness—the conviction that came to be characterized as "moral equivalence."

Beginning with the Roosevelt administration, as he analyzes it for us, treatyism has flourished in this country, mostly within that community Lenin would have called the ruling class but we tend euphemistically to call the elite, in consideration of its wish to pretend that it has no real power. At various times treatyism has become more intense, now and then as the result of prompting from the Soviets, but for the largest part as the result of an entirely self-induced illusion, whether under the name of thaw, détente, Helsinki, or Reykjavik.

In any case, in its grand tour of Soviet deceit and manipulation and the corresponding Western, mostly American, denial of reality, *The Long Pretense* does not progress either through time or through a given structure of evidence in the accustomed linear fashion. On the contrary, its form is much more akin to a musical one, in which Soviet leaders from Lenin to Gorbachev are brought forward in harmonic variations, so to speak, on Lenin's original statement: "He is no socialist who does not understand that the victory over the bourgeoisie may require losses of territory and defeats." Meanwhile there is a kind of steady bass accompaniment on the theme of Western cupidity and gullibility. Thus, though not a lengthy volume, the book is not easy to read. Again, as with a complex piece of music, one has to attend carefully, for *The Long Pretense* moves back and forth from period to period and issue to issue almost without warning. It is as if there were much too much to say, and authorial weariness with having to say it at all were battling with an insistent hope that what still needs to be said might yet be heard.

Nor are there any sensational revelations here, scoops to make a world of obdurately shameless journalists ashamed at last, or tidbits for scholars to chew on. What is new in this book, however, is something that is ever new and at the same time, for those familiar with Arnold Beichman and his work, a very old story: namely, an almost miraculously energetic, unflagging, and undistractable determination to establish a permanently truthful record of the course of Communism in the 20th century—a record both of its crimes against humanity as a political system, and the crimes committed against truth, decency, and intellectual honor by its Western devotees and apologists.

It has been both dirty and steady work, and to call it thankless is an almost laughable understatement. (Except, of course, in the Soviet Union, where the thanks are commencing to flood.) To be sure, Arnold Beichman is by no means the only person to engage in this work, nor was he the first, nor will he very likely be the last. We have only begun, for example, to scratch the surface of all the secrets stored in the KGB files; and for the job of organizing the archive of Western mendacity—less scarifying than in the Soviet Union, certainly, but since uncoerced, also in some sense less justifiable—there may never be enough hands. But if neither the first nor the last, Beichman is easily among the most dedicated and spiritually attractive.

PERHAPS only someone who has at some time participated with Arnold Beichman in the effort to keep the United States government and the American people mindful of the danger to them from this noxious materialized theory that is

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MIDGE DECTER, *who served as executive director of the Committee for the Free World throughout its ten-year existence, is now a Distinguished Fellow of the Institute on Religion and Public Life.*

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Communist power can appreciate how arduous a lifetime commitment like his can be: how many are the discouragements, how wounding the insults, how depressing the lack of support from those who belong in the fray but hide, how very tempting the many invitations to trim, to back and fill, or jump on some passing bandwagon and move out. To have kept the faith for more than 50 years, and with damn-all reward except the kind both bestowed and received inside oneself, and to be at it still, as Arnold Beichman is in this book—warning us not to jump into any more unnecessary and unenforceable treaties; warning us not to pursue our present destructive and futile and above all ignorant policy of saving Gorbachev's government; cautioning, pleading, arguing with verve and appetite—is as rare to contemplate as it is both reassuring and consoling.

For the rest, Arnold Beichman has done the state some service, and there are those who know it. One day there may be many, many more.

War and Warriors

THE COMMANDERS. By BOB WOODWARD. *Simon & Schuster. 398 pp. $24.95.*

HAZARDOUS DUTY: AN AMERICAN SOLDIER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. By JOHN K. SINGLAUB with MALCOLM MCCONNELL. *Summit Books. 574 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by ANGELO M. CODEVILLA

WHY should these two books be read together? One reason has to do with their subject matter. Retired Major General John Singlaub describes nearly 50 years' involvement in America's wars, much of it at high levels, while Bob Woodward describes how top U.S. officials made their decisions regarding the last two of America's wars: Panama in 1989 and Iraq in 1991. Yet the two authors and, generally, the people they describe speak starkly different languages. It is as if once upon a time the tribe to which Singlaub belongs had conducted American statecraft according to its ways, while now it runs by the rites of Woodward's tribe. Hence another reason for reading the two books together: this clash of cultures is worth pondering.

Bob Woodward, a fixture in Washington and of the Washington *Post* since his "insider" stories helped bring down Richard Nixon in 1974, has been routinely accused of using phantom sources for his reportage and of putting too-specific words into his subjects' mouths. But no one disputes that Woodward is an accurate painter of Washington portraits. A reviewer of *The Commanders* in the New York *Times* rightly reproached Woodward with being no more than "a camera"—one might better say, a tape recorder. He himself goes no deeper into the events in Panama and the Gulf than do the people whose words and thoughts he reports.

That is, not deeply at all. *The Commanders* is, indeed, less a history of events than a history of the conversations among President Bush, Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, and General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), plus assorted generals, ambassadors, and intelligence analysts. And to judge by those conversations, even to the individuals involved, the events themselves are of secondary importance; primary is interpersonal jockeying. Washington's conventional wisdom is that perception *is* reality. Each of Woodward's "commanders" has his eye firmly fixed on how he looks to each of the others, and above all to the Boss, George Bush. As for Bush, he emerges from this book as a willful but empty man.

IN October 1989, Panama intruded on George Bush's inner circle just as Colin Powell was taking over as chairman of the JCS. A Panamanian major was asking for minimal American help in deposing his dictator. There followed three days of nonstop meetings and phone calls among America's great men. The stakes were high: somebody might get killed in Panama, and somebody might look bad in Washington. Therefore (!), no one chose to take responsibility for making the coup succeed or for letting it fail.

At the end, the "commanders" had not stepped on one another's toes, but Noriega had weathered the coup and they all looked silly. Sensing that the Boss wanted to expunge the humiliation, they prepared a plan for using two U.S. divisions to crush the Panamanian army. When all was ready, another round of conversations centered on whether the conduct of a Panamanian military policeman toward the wife of an American officer was sufficient provocation to warrant executing the plan.

Nowhere, in Woodward's report, was there formal consideration of the United States's interest in the region: no identification of our enemy, of our objectives, of the most efficient means of reaching them. Everywhere, subordinates scrambled to send "options" to their superiors, who chose among them *à la carte*, with an eye primarily to their own backsides.

THOUGHTLESSNESS was again glaring in the case of the Gulf War. Never does Woodward record the President asking his advisers: "What are we after in the Gulf, and whom do we have to kill to get it?" There was, it seems, no discussion of the connection between the political ends sought and the military means employed. As a consequence, the U.S. government moved over a half-million people and 12 million tons of material (about 20 tons for every human being), killed tens of thousands of Iraqis at the cost of dozens of American lives, put in jeopardy the lives of millions of innocent Kurds, Shiites, and Palestinians, but managed to spare the regime of Saddam Hussein. In the end, Operation Desert Storm might well have lived up to its name—a disturbance that

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA, *a fellow of the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, is the author of, most recently,* Espionage: Informing Statecraft in a New Century (*Free Press*).

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blows the sand dunes around, but changes nothing.

One obstacle preventing President Bush and his first team from addressing the simple-but-difficult questions is the language they speak. Indeed, Woodward's book is most interesting in its exposition of that language, which is the language of allusion: words and silences are meant to make an impression on the listener while giving him as little ammunition as possible.

The "commanders" do not so much speak or hear as send and receive signals. They feel each other out, presenting views as their own only after having made sure that their interlocutor will approve. When it comes to dealing with the Boss, they may stab him in the back but they will never argue with him. They try to lead him along, but if they sense that he is leaning in a different direction, they will suppress their own option or, at most, present it impersonally. Instead of explaining their view of something, they characterize it with words that have no inherent meaning—as when Colin Powell, referring to a statement by George Bush, remarked that he "had six-shooters in both hands and he was blazing away." And Bob Woodward, like a good tape recorder, never says whether any of this is good or bad for the country, only how it serves the actors in the great game of insider politics.

ONE can imagine no greater contrast than John Singlaub, who speaks in one declarative sentence after another and whose words refer to real actions and real things. Some of those words are honor, shame, courage, cowardice, right, wrong, yes, and no.

Fresh out of college in 1943, Lieutenant John Singlaub was parachuted behind Nazi lines in France to gather intelligence and lead guerrillas. His supervisor in the wartime Office of Strategic Services was another lieutenant, William Casey. As the war ended, Singlaub parachuted into a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp to confront its commander and rescue its victims. In 1948, as a member of a small mission of intelligence and

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The Arabs of Israel

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The papers and television bring us daily reports about the happenings in the areas administered by Israel—Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip, and the allegedly poor treatment the Arabs receive at the hands of the Israeli authorities. Leaving the administered territories to future analysis, it is of interest to consider the status of Arab citizens in Israel proper.

What are the facts?

■ Israel is a democratic country—an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions coexist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. Seventeen per cent of the total population (700,000 people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the state in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

■ It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region: there are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

■ Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. There are some 700 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 200,000 students—17 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created. 90% of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 3,000 Arab students attend such schools.

■ All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are administered by their own authorities and protected by the government.

■ In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy and child marriage, and has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

■ There is, however one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states, with the recent exception of Egypt, are the avowed enemies of Israel and are dedicated to its destruction, this exemption is granted by the Israeli Government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, and have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately 700,000 Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and to persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1948—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now 700,000 Arabs in Israel, as against 150,000 in 1948—a more than four-fold increase. These figures alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

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assistance to the Chinese Nationalists in Manchuria, Singlaub watched as Washington tilted the civil war to Mao's "agrarian reformers." As a combat officer in Korea and Vietnam, and in increasingly responsible jobs in Germany, Washington, and, finally, Korea, Singlaub lived by simple standards: take responsibility, and serve your boss, above all by telling him the truth. Whether one agrees or disagrees with his politics, it is refreshing to read the words of someone who has lived through a government career clean and with his back straight.

Nor, in his time, was Singlaub alone. Typical of his portraits is that of General Harold Johnson, Army chief of staff in 1965. President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara had asked the Army for a plan to deploy forces to Vietnam without calling up the reserves and without extending tours of duty. Singlaub presented the plan to General Johnson, together with the comment that implementing it would ruin the Army and hurt the war effort. General Johnson went off to argue against McNamara. When he lost, General Johnson put on his best uniform and drove to the White House with the intention of resigning in protest. But then he talked himself out of it. Thereafter, General Johnson was burdened with a sense of shame and responsibility for a disaster he did not try hard enough to prevent.

Incident after incident in these memoirs instructs us that the business of national security demands absolute clarity about the ends being sought, and leaders willing to speak their minds on issues of substance. The now-common Washington practice of exercising influence through "signals" and press leaks rather than argument is simply foreign to Singlaub. The mere possibility that a fellow officer might not be telling him the truth is unacceptable to him.

All of which would no doubt strike Woodward's "commanders" as naive. They would chuckle condescendingly. But could anyone, after reading these two books, doubt the old truth that the greatest form of sophistication is simplicity?

The Racial Dilemma

THE PROMISED LAND: THE GREAT BLACK MIGRATION AND HOW IT CHANGED AMERICA. By NICHOLAS LEMANN. *Knopf. 410 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

THE seeming intractability of black poverty has vexed our political life for nearly 30 years, ever since inner-city riots jolted Americans out of the assumption that the country's race problems had been put to rest by the adoption of federal laws outlawing legal segregation. Complicating matters have been the various taboos placed on discussion of racial affairs—most notably the black family structure—along with a tendency to confuse the anxieties of the black middle class with the much more troubling predicament of the black poor, and a continuing penchant among blacks and liberal whites to ascribe America's racial dilemma almost exclusively to white racism. Part of the appeal of Nicholas Lemann's much-praised book may lie, in fact, in the refreshing intellectual honesty and reasonableness he brings to the story he has to tell, characteristics which stand in marked contrast to the dissembling and arrant dishonesty so often encountered in the debate over racial policy.

The Promised Land is organized around the lives of individual blacks, from their origins in Clarksdale, Mississippi, a cotton sharecropping center which provided thousands of recruits for the migration northward, to their experiences in the Chicago ghetto where many came to settle. It is in the biographies of Ruby Haynes, Uless Carter, and George Hicks that Lemann's considerable journalistic talents are most sparklingly on display. The individual experiences he narrates, along with his cogent observations on the culture of Mississippi sharecropper society, drive home a crucial point: that the roots of today's urban crisis can be traced to the pattern of black social existence in the segregated Deep South.

As Lemann relates it, the "tangle of pathology" to which Daniel Patrick Moynihan referred in his ill-fated 1965 report on the black family was clearly in evidence in the lives of Negroes of the Jim Crow-era Mississippi Delta, in large measure due to the state of dependency imposed by segregation and the plantation economy. Out-of-wedlock births were commonplace and life revolved around fornication, petty crime, fighting, and the consumption of illegal alcohol. Men proved unreliable as husbands and providers. Ruby Haynes, who endured a series of unfortunate romantic liaisons after moving to Chicago, recalls only one happy marriage among her Clarksdale friends, and that only on the third try.

By this account, then, the high percentage of female-headed families among inner-city blacks is not the result of the destruction of a once-stable family structure by the relentless pressures of city life and Northern prejudice, but a case of a bad situation migrating from one region of the country to another, and made much worse by the absence of those uniquely black institutions which had brought a measure of cohesion to Negro society in the South.

To those Southern blacks who fled North—driven from their homes by the mechanization of the cotton industry and encouraged by white segregationists—a city like Chicago seemed very much like the biblical promised land, a place of fabulous wealth where jobs and dignity awaited. Initially, those jobs were not only easy to come by, they were ideally suited to uneducated farm boys seeking a decent living by performing unskilled labor in the stockyards, meat plants, and steel factories.

Eventually, however, the march of technology all but eliminated these typically blue-collar jobs. Like the sociologist William Julius

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ARCH PUDDINGTON'S *most recent articles in* COMMENTARY *were "Black Leaders vs. Desert Storm" (May 1991) and "The Question of Black Leadership" (January 1991). He works for Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty in New York and is the author of* Failed Utopias (ICS Press).

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Wilson, Lemann sees in the decline of smokestack America a crucial factor in the failure of blacks to rise with the relative ease of other immigrant groups. This is a debatable point. The 60's ghetto explosions, after all, took place during a period of high growth, nearly full employment, and dramatic reduction in poverty, a time when the maxim, "a rising tide lifts all the boats," seemed altogether appropriate. Yet it was precisely at this juncture, when semi-skilled unionized jobs were readily available and blacks were being hired in unprecedented numbers, that America was informed that its inner cities were seething with fury and economic despair.

STILL, Lemann hardly restricts himself to economic factors in explaining the dire straits of the black poor. He is keenly sensitive to so-called cultural factors, including family structure, in the growth of the black underclass and of the devastating phenomenon he labels black racial isolation. Nor, in analyzing the dynamics of that isolation, does Lemann stress white prejudice. Instead, he emphasizes a series of political decisions taken both by those resisting any change in the black condition and, paradoxically, by liberals who saw themselves as radical advocates of black progress.

Exhibit A is federally sponsored low-income housing. In Chicago, high-rise housing projects were not initially perceived as a program exclusively for blacks; it was only after a series of violent confrontations over extremely modest attempts at neighborhood integration that a decision was made to limit construction to the ghetto. Yet few people objected to this policy, least of all the prospective black tenants, who saw the new buildings as offering a quality of life beyond their wildest imaginings. Ruby Haynes, who had lived in a series of slum buildings since moving to Chicago, recalls the day in 1962 when she moved into a newly-built project as one of the happiest in her life.

The enthusiasm for the projects was not unjustified, for up until that time low-income housing was a government program that seemed to work. This was owing in no small part to the scrupulous attention paid to the screening of tenant applicants in order to keep the projects free of criminals and the unruly. To gain approval for her application, Ruby Haynes actually married her common-law husband because of a regulation barring the admission of unwed mothers. But it was precisely at this time that the standards for admission and tenant behavior began to crumble, victim in part of the assault on welfare rules launched by the civil-liberties movement. The disappearance of such standards transformed the projects into outposts of high-density poverty, populated by welfare mothers and their children, ruled over by gang members, and notable for the absence of working-age males.

PUBLIC housing was not the only program launched with noble intentions which worsened the conditions it was intended to alleviate. Indeed, Lemann devotes a long and thoroughly fascinating chapter to a history of the War on Poverty, a program which he attacks not for the standard reason that it resulted in a waste of money but rather for its role in exacerbating the isolation of blacks from the rest of America.

By its very concept, Lemann contends, the War on Poverty discouraged integration. On the political level, the stress on the "maximum feasible participation" of the poor in the administration of local anti-poverty agencies was preordained to create enemies among local officials like Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. Nor was this an unforeseen consequence. The idea—preposterous in retrospect—of using federal money to stimulate an alternative and presumably radical inner-city political leadership was deliberately built into the program by its Left-liberal architects.

Lemann shows how the community-action approach fit in with the racial atmosphere of the 60's, dominated by urban disorders, the rise of militancy, the Black-Is-Beautiful movement, and the practically unchallengeable idea that "ghetto society was not in any way weak or flawed or in need of middle-class outsiders to take it by the hand." In the public discussion of race, no event was more crucial than the furious response to the Moynihan Report, with its prescient warning about the looming crisis of black female-headed families. Instead of helping to point the way toward a government strategy, the report, called by Lemann "the most refuted document in history," earned its author a torrent of vituperation, which in turn chilled the intellectual atmosphere for a generation to come.

If Lemann agrees with the Moynihan Report's intellectual thrust, he nonetheless is harsh in his judgment of Moynihan, whom he accuses of intellectual opportunism and of lacking the courage to defend his conclusions. Indeed, Lemann's treatment of Moynihan is much rougher than his assessment of the anti-poverty officials who blithely doled out federal money to Chicago street gangs, liberals who declined to support Lyndon Johnson's racial initiatives because of their antiwar views, and black leaders whose hysterical chastisement of America at a time of unprecedented opportunity contributed to a general disillusionment over civil-rights issues. Lemann seems to believe that, had alternative ideas prevailed in the shaping of the War on Poverty, the result would have been much greater progress in reducing black poverty. In fact, however, once the riots began, rational and honest debate on race relations was foreclosed.

NICHOLAS LEMANN is an integrationist. Although he recognizes the futility of coercive, government-mandated policies like busing, and can be scathing on schemes for the political or economic empowerment of the inner city, or for a drastic overhaul of the welfare system, he believes that the federal government still has a major role to play in ending black isolation. In particular he makes a strong case for a federal jobs policy which would give blacks the resources to get *out* of the inner city, now rendered beyond renewal by the pervasive violence and general deteri-

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oration of businesses, schools, and other institutions.

It is all the more regrettable, then, that Lemann does not subject his own policy ideas to the same degree of rigorous analysis he devotes to competing proposals. For leaving aside the cost of a policy revolving around federally-funded jobs for the inner-city poor (extremely high, one would imagine), and the total absence of political support for such a policy, there are serious doubts as to how much of the underclass would be reached by it. One may question, for instance, whether such an undertaking would appeal to the crucial population of unemployed black males, young men who have often disdained employment opportunities during periods of high growth and low unemployment. Lemann does not linger on the subject, but *The Promised Land* is replete with examples of male irresponsibility toward work and family. While one can certainly envision some energetic mothers pulling themselves out of the welfare system by working as, say, school paraprofessionals, the idea that such jobs would draw inner-city men into the work force will strike many as too optimistic, to put it mildly.

Another objection is that blacks are already overly dependent on government employment, an apprehension reinforced by statistics in this book regarding the heavy reliance of blacks, particularly college graduates, on government jobs. And to those engaged directly in government work should be added those who owe their employment to private-sector affirmative-action plans, another indication of the thoroughly unhealthy degree to which the employment situation of black Americans depends on the political mood of the country.

Finally, Lemann's abiding faith in the ability of the federal government to stimulate the massive transformation he calls for is open to serious question. His assessment of the War on Poverty can easily be read as a cautionary tale about the unintended consequences of the most idealistically motivated state initiative. The jobs approach favored by Lemann was by his own reckoning hardly considered, nor was it pressed even by the civil-rights lobby. And had the Johnson administration launched such a massive jobs program, one can easily imagine how it would have been subverted through the piling-on of rights, the inevitable clamors for inclusion by other "oppressed minorities," and demands for more and more expenditures as the program was seen to be failing its goals.

If Lemann's policy prescriptions are not always convincing, however, he does challenge those with alternative solutions to deal honestly with certain hard facts about the ghetto poor. Particularly cogent is his refutation of those who believe that blacks can emulate the experiences of immigrant groups and escape poverty through entrepreneurship. By Lemann's account, the limited experience of Southern Negroes with private enterprise has been fatally eroded by life in the ghetto; the one successful businessman in his book, who appears in the concluding chapter, got his start through the anti-poverty program.

Nor is it necessary to concur with Lemann's policy proposals to appreciate the achievement of *The Promised Land* as a work of historical journalism. Lemann does not have the answer to today's racial dilemma, but he addresses the full dimensions of a crisis which so many others would prefer to shun.

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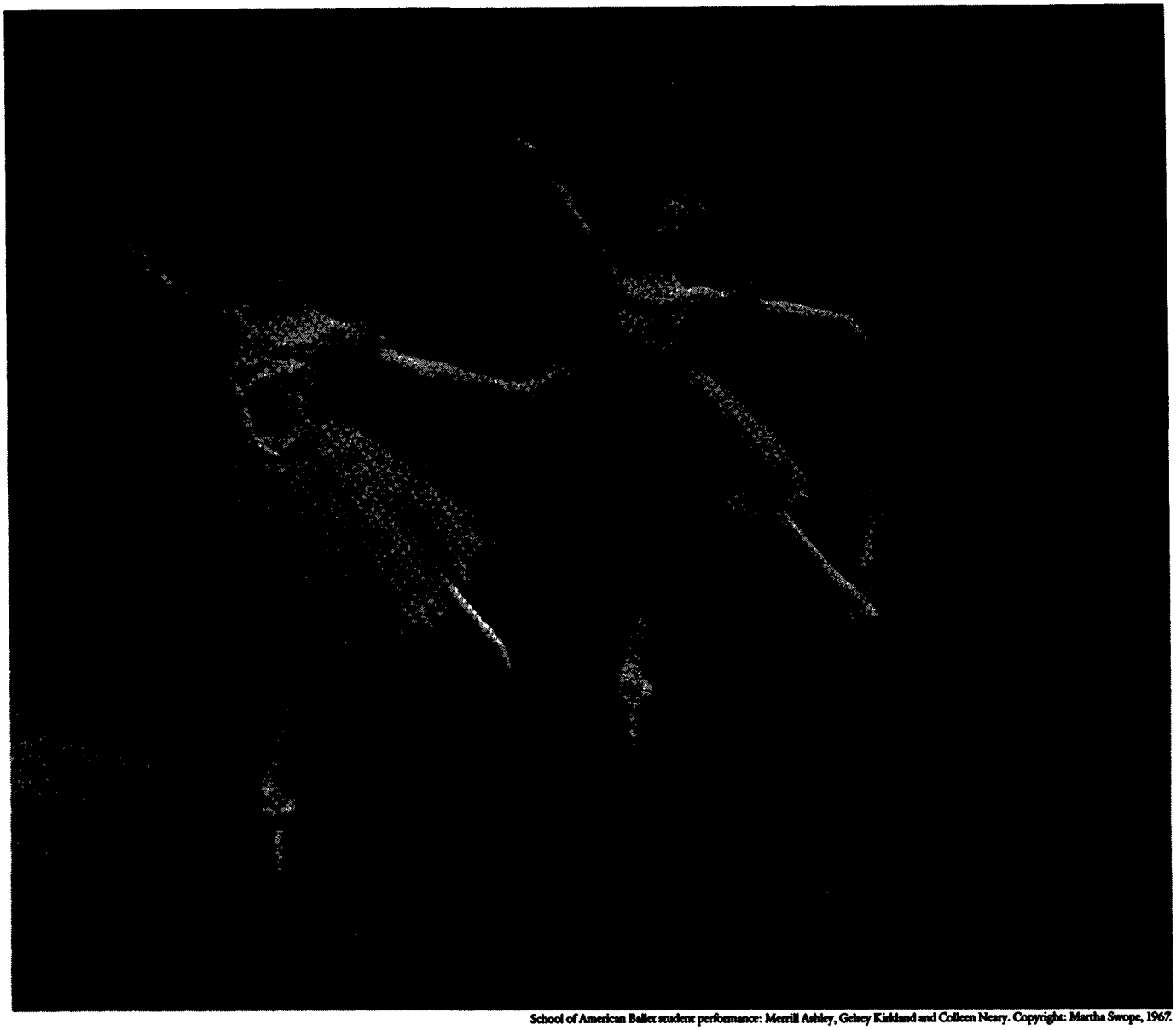

School of American Ballet student performance: Merrill Ashley, Gelsey Kirkland and Colleen Neary. Copyright: Martha Swope, 1967.

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